DAILY EXPRESS

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER BRITAIN

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026 £2

HAPPY FREEDOM

Man United say goodbye to Amorim

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OUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO HELP BOOST YOUR 2026 FINANCES

FREE PULLOUT INSIDE

Millions of adults eating 40% more than the recommended 6g a day

NEW WARNING OVER 'HIDDEN' DANGER OF SALT IN DIET

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**
Health Editor

MILLIONS of us are risking our health by eating too much salt.

The average working-age Brit has as much as there is in 155 packets of crisps every week.

But most of it is "hidden" in everyday foods such as bread, cereals and ready meals, making it hard to keep track.

The recommended daily limit is 6g – but the typical intake is 40% higher at 8.4g, according to British Heart Foundation analysis.

The 2.4g difference is equivalent to eating an extra six packets of ready salted crisps per day, the charity said.

Dell Stanford of the BHF said: "This is bad news for our heart health, as eating too much salt significantly increases the risk of high blood pressure – a major cause of heart

TURN TO PAGE 5

School's out as the big chill hits

SEE PAGES 2&3

HOLIDAYS END

CAIRNGORMS

A brave swimmer poses in the ice with a shark's head she made from snow

HASSALL GREEN

Fresh snowfall highlights pink paint of St Philip's Church in Cheshire

Welcome

THREE wise men make the end of the festive holiday more bearable by taking to a snowbound beach with sledges.

And whatever star they follow this year, seeing a dog enjoying a sleigh ride by the sea is a great way to kick it all off with a day of cold, frank nonsense and mirth.

The scene at Blyth in Northumberland was one of a winter wonderland series across the country as a raw Arctic blast brought snow to many regions.

Hundreds of schools were unable to open and flights were cancelled amid sub-zero temperatures which are

BY **GILES SHELDRICK**
Chief Reporter

expected to stay for the rest of the week. The worst of the weather hit Scotland, where the Met Office issued four amber snow warnings, with six yellow snow and ice warnings for the rest of the UK.

Chief meteorologist Matthew Lehnert said: "As we begin the first full working week of the year we face a range of winter weather hazards with snow showers and ice. The UK will continue to experience a range of winter weather hazards through this week, with low

CLAYTON HILL

Windmill looks out over the snow-covered South Downs in West Sussex

HUNTLY

Snow in Aberdeenshire makes parked cars look like Christmas card scene

WITH ICY BLAST

BLYTH

A dog is pulled along on a sledge on the Northumberland coast watched by three other sledgers

to the snow year...

temperatures as well as snow showers and the risk of ice for many."

Overnight temperatures dipped to as low as -10.9°C in Shap, Cumbria.

The greatest accumulation of snow recorded by the Met Office was 52cm at Tomintoul in Banffshire, 35cm at Durris in Kincardineshire and 34cm at Loch Glascarnoch in Ross and Cromarty.

Forecasters said up to 5cm to 10cm could accumulate in the coming days, but freezing temperatures would make ice a nationwide hazard.

Schools across Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles, and Aberdeenshire were unable to open as were hundreds across the rest of the UK including Chailey School in East Sussex, which was forced into an emergency closure on the first day of the spring term because it had no hot water or heating.

Loganair cancelled flights from Aberdeen and Inverness airports, while Liverpool John Lennon Airport closed its runway due to wintry conditions.

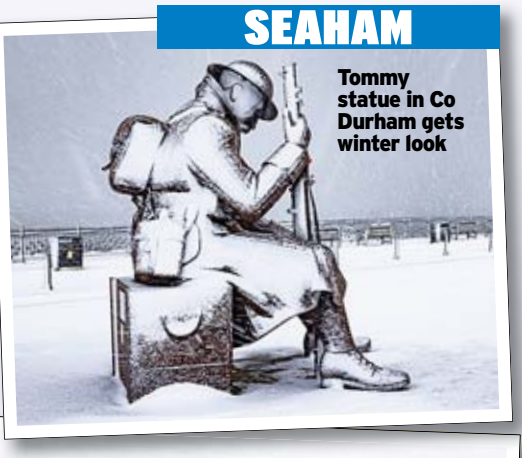
An amber alert remains in place until Friday, meaning cold weather is likely to cause significant disruption with a risk of heavy snowfall from Swansea to Norwich. The UK Health Security Agency also issued amber alerts as it warned of a spike in deaths, particularly among the elderly.

The NHS urged the vulnerable to stay inside and to heat homes to at least 18C and, if necessary, to wear hats and gloves.

Durham County Council told the elderly "wiggling their toes" would help to stay warm and improve circulation.

Dr Agostinho Sousa of the UKHSA said: "As the colder weather sets in it is vital to check in on friends, family and neighbours that are most vulnerable."

SEAHAM



Tommy statue in Co Durham gets winter look

UPWARE

A game of ice hockey is played on a frozen flooded field in Cambridgeshire

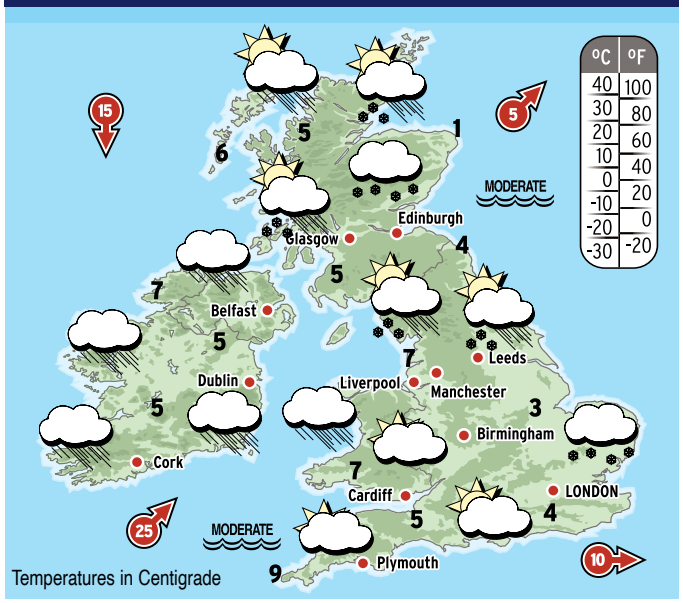
SCARBOROUGH

Snow blankets the streets as far as the eye can see at North Yorkshire coast

BIRMINGHAM

Hettie sledges at Warley Woods

WEATHER FORECAST



Today's summary: Sunny start, rainy evening

North West: Clouds with drizzle. Clearer later with light sprinkles. Breezy and quite chilly. High 4C (39F).

Northern Ireland: Cloudy with sleet or possibly snow turning to rain. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 4C (39F).

Wales: Bright start giving way to wet conditions. Increasing winds. Mild temperatures expected. High 6C (43F).

Midlands: Cloudy with rain later. Breezy with strong winds and a chill in the air. High 4C (39F).

North East/Yorks: Unsettled with morning snow showers and isolated afternoon rain showers. Light winds. High 4C (39F).

Scotland: Cloudy with snow, transitioning to wet conditions. Brisk winds from the south. Chilly. High 5C (41F).

East Anglia: Cold and cloudy. Late sleet. Strong winds, temperatures just above freezing. High 2C (36F).

London/South East: Chilly start with sunny intervals. Cloudy later, with light drizzle. Breezy and cool. High 5C (41F).

South: Cloudy, rain by evening. Some sun later. Breezy, turning milder. High 6C (43F).

South West: Cloudy with drizzle. Overcast later with wet spells. Breezy south winds, staying cool. High 5C (41F).

Channel Isles: Cloudy with light drizzle. Sunny spells later. Strong winds developing. Cool temperatures. High 6C (43F).

Sea: North Sea: Moderate. Irish Sea: Rough. Channel: Slight.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Expect a mix of sunshine and cloud. Breezy with occasional showers, becoming more frequent later. Mild overall, with cooler nights.

SIX-DAY FORECAST Temperatures in Centigrade

	WED min max	THU min max	FRI min max	SAT min max	SUN min max	MON min max
London	1 5	3 6	0 6	3 5	5 8	6 9
Belfast	1 4	2 4	0 4	4 5	4 7	5 7
Birmingham	1 4	2 5	0 4	2 4	4 7	5 7
Cardiff	3 6	3 7	1 6	4 7	6 9	6 9
Glasgow	1 4	1 6	0 4	2 5	3 6	4 6
Manchester	1 4	2 5	0 4	2 5	4 7	5 7
Newcastle	0 3	1 4	0 3	1 3	3 5	4 6
Norwich	0 4	2 4	0 5	1 4	4 6	5 8
Plymouth	6 8	5 9	4 7	7 8	8 10	8 10

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	TEMP (max)
Aberdeen	0.7	0.00	-2	0
Aberporth	3.1	0.13	1	4
Alnwick	2.8	0.05	-2	0
Belfast	4.3	0.05	-3	2
Birmingham	4.3	0.00	-4	1
B'mouth	6.9	0.01	-7	3
Bristol	6.3	0.01	-2	2
Cardiff	6.5	0.00	-3	4
Durham	2.4	0.00	-4	2
Edinburgh	5.4	0.00	-5	2
Glasgow	6.4	0.00	-5	2
Hull	2.5	0.03	-4	2
Ipswich	6.3	0.00	-4	-1
Leeds	4.7	0.00	-4	2
Lincoln	6.7	0.00	-5	1
London	6.6	0.00	-3	2
Manchester	4.5	0.00	-10	1
Oxford	6.7	0.00	-4	2
S'hampton	6.0	0.02	-1	3
St Andrews	5.8	0.00	-4	2

Britain Extremes: (24 hours to 11pm Sunday)
Warmest: Isles Of Scilly, 7c (44f).
Coldest: Sennybridge, -7c (20f).
Wettest: Boulmer, 0.22ins.
Sunniest: Wisley, 7.4hrs.

Moon, sun and tides
MOON rises: 8.12pm, sets: 10.03am
SUN rises London: 8.05am, sets: 4.08pm
Manchester rises: 8.23am, sets: 4.06pm
Last Quarter 10 January

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(1.25am), (1.25pm)
Liverpool	(1.16am), (1.32pm)
Greenock	(12.41am), (12.52pm)
Dover	(1.04am), (1.20pm)

Lighting-up times

Belfast	4.15pm-8.43am	Glasgow	4.00pm-8.44am
Birmingham	4.10pm-8.16am	London	4.08pm-8.04am
Bristol	4.18pm-8.14am	Manchester	4.06pm-8.22am
		Newcastle	3.55pm-8.28am

Europe forecast

Today			Tomorrow		
Amsterdam	Sleet	3C/37F	Amsterdam	Sleet	3C/37F
Brussels	Fair	2C/36F	Brussels	Snow	1C/34F
Dublin	Drizzle	5C/41F	Dublin	Rain	5C/41F
Frankfurt	Fair	1C/34F	Frankfurt	Cloudy	0C/32F
Geneva	Fair	0C/32F	Geneva	Fair	-1C/30F
Lisbon	Sunny	12C/54F	Lisbon	Rain	14C/57F
Madrid	Sunny	7C/45F	Madrid	Fair	7C/45F
Paris	Fair	2C/36F	Paris	Snow	2C/36F
Rome	Rain	13C/55F	Rome	Cloudy	10C/50F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F			C	F			C	F
Amsterdam	Snow	0	32	Hong Kong	Sunny	21	70	New York	Fair	0	32
Athens	Shwrs	17	63	Istanbul	Fair	14	57	Nice	Cloudy	10	50
Barcelona	Rain	4	39	Jersey	Rain	4	39	Nicosia	Sunny	16	61
Berlin	Fair	0	32	Larnaca	Sunny	18	64	Perth	Sunny	34	93
Budapest	Cloudy	0	32	Las Palmas	Fair	18	64	Prague	Fair	-2	28
Cairo	Sunny	18	64	Los Angeles	Thndr	16	61	Singapore	Fair	29	84
Cape Town	Sunny	28	82	Luxor	Sunny	22	72	Stockholm	Cloudy	-8	18
Casablanca	Thndr	17	63	Malaga	Fair	16	61	Sydney	Fair	24	75
Corfu	Thndr	17	63	Mallorca	Cloudy	10	50	Tel Aviv	Sunny	23	73
Dublin	Sunny	1	34	Malta	Sunny	19	66	Tenerife	Sunny	23	73
Dubrovnik	Thndr	15	59	Melbourne	Sunny	22	72	Toronto	Cloudy	-2	28
Faro	Sunny	13	55	Miami	Fair	24	75	Tunis	Sunny	19	66
Florence	Rain	6	43	Moscow	Snow	-5	23	Venice	Cloudy	4	39
Gibraltar	Fair	15	59	Nairobi	Sunny	24	75	Vienna	Cloudy	-3	27
Guernsey	Shwrs	4	39	New Delhi	Sunny	14	57	Warsaw	Cloudy	-2	28

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Mahmood will fight Euro court over ISIS bride

Judges blasted in Begum battle

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**
Home Affairs Editor

SHABANA Mahmood has insisted she will fight European judges over Shamima Begum's bid to return to the UK.

The jihadi bride's hopes of leaving Syria were revived after the judges challenged Britain's stance in the case.

The European Court of Human Rights has formally told the Home Office to justify its decision to strip Isis fanatic Begum of her British citizenship in 2019.

But Home Secretary Ms Mahmood insisted the government will continue to defend its position, after every UK court had ruled the move legal.

Facing questions over the controversy yesterday, the Home Secretary said: "The case against Shamima Begum has been litigated by the previous government all the way to the UK Supreme Court, who did not hear the last appeal on this because all legal questions have been now dealt with.

IS bride Shamima Begum and, below, Shabana Mahmood

"We have accepted that position as a government in this case.

"We will robustly defend this at the European Court of Human Rights." Ms Mahmood was grilled by Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp in Parliament.

He told the Daily Express: "Shamima Begum chose to go to Syria and support Daesh which is a murderous, violent terrorist regime.

"It's deeply worrying the European court is now looking at using the Convention to make the UK take her back. This case is a further reason why we need to leave the European Convention on Human Rights."

Shadow Home Office minister Katie Lam added: "Once again we see a foreign court in Strasbourg trying to get in the way of keeping the British public safe."

The European judges have asked the government if it broke human rights and anti-trafficking laws.

Begum's lawyers called the latest twist an "unprecedented opportunity". She left East London aged 15 for Syria in 2015.

OPINION: PAGE 12

First migrant boat of 2026 arrives amid crackdown

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**

THE first migrant boat this year arrived in Dover yesterday.

Dozens of desperate asylum seekers ignored freezing temperatures and dangerous Channel conditions to cross.

Rescue teams had to carry at least one person to shore on a stretcher.

Other attempts to reach the UK were aborted because conditions deteriorated, sources told the Express.

Powers

The earliest point in the calendar year to record crossings was on January 2 in 2021 and 2023, of 10 and 44 migrants respectively.

Last year, the first arrivals of 61 people made it on January 4.

It comes as new powers to seize mobile phones and sim cards from migrants come into force yesterday.

Officers will be able to take electronic devices from people at Manston processing centre in Kent, without needing to arrest them.

And they can search someone's mouth for hidden sim cards.

The move is aimed at getting intelligence on the smuggling gangs.

CORRECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

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FROM PAGE ONE

attacks, strokes, and other serious diseases."

Salt contains sodium, which plays a key role in regulating fluid balance in the body.

Eating too much of it can cause extra water to be drawn into the bloodstream, leading to high blood pressure.

Over time, this can put strain on the heart and blood vessels, increasing the risk of problems such as heart attack, stroke and vascular dementia.

Around a third of adults in England have high blood pressure, but many of them are undiagnosed or untreated, said Professor Azeem Majeed, head of the department of primary care and public health at Imperial College London.

The condition contributes to tens of thousands of UK deaths every year, he warned. He added: "Because it often causes no symptoms, it is frequently referred to as a 'silent killer'. Yet the health impact is enormous.

"Reducing salt intake is one of the most effective and affordable interventions we have to lower population blood pressure."

However, more than half of us are not confident in estimating our salt intake, according to a YouGov poll of more than 2,000 adults for the BHF. Only 16% were aware of the 6g per day recommendation.

A watershed for junk food advertising came into force yesterday, banning adverts for foods high in fat, salt and sugar on TV before 9pm and any time online.

The UK has a long-running voluntary salt reduction programme which sets targets for the food industry. But the BHF is calling for mandatory targets.

BHF senior dietitian Ms Stanford said: "The government must step in to make the healthy choice much easier for families by giving manufacturers an incentive to take out excessive amounts of salt from our food."

Sonia Pombo, of Action on Salt, said the vast majority of salt in our diets "comes from the food we buy, not what we add at the table".

She added: "That means the most effective action must focus on the food industry, where real change can be delivered at scale."

Ms Pombo called for legally binding targets and consequences for non-compliance, such as a salt tax. She added: "Other countries have shown this works: South Africa has introduced legally enforced maximum salt limits across staple foods like bread and processed meats, while Argentina and Colombia have implemented mandatory sodium targets and warning labels, leading to widespread reformulation.

"The UK was once a global leader on salt reduction, achieving significant progress when government set clear expectations.

"But that progress has stalled as voluntary schemes and industry lobbying have diluted ambition.

"If we want to cut heart disease, stroke and health inequalities, the only way forward is tough, iron-tight policies that put public health before industry profits."

The Department of Health said: "This government is taking strong action to tackle health problems caused by poor diet as part of our 10 Year Health Plan. We are restricting advertising of junk food on TV and online, limiting volume price promotions on less healthy foods, including those high in salt, and introducing mandatory reporting on healthier food sales."

Committed

Kate Halliwell of The Food and Drink Federation said: "Food and drink manufacturers are committed to helping people reduce the salt in their diets.

"As well as clearly labelling the amount of salt in food, our members' products now have a third of the salt they did a decade ago. But the issue of poor diets isn't one that food businesses can tackle alone. We hope to work with government on a cohesive approach to support healthier diets, which includes giving businesses the regulatory certainty and support they need to continue investing in innovation and build on the positive progress already made."

The BHF analysis was based on standard 32-40g packets of ready salted, lightly salted or sea salt crisps with an average 0.38g salt.

Salt consumption date was from Public Health England analysis of the 2018/19 National Diet and Nutrition Survey, which measured intake via urinary sodium analysis.

OPINION: PAGE 12

155

Equivalent in bags of crisps to the amount of salt Britons eat each week

Too much salt can add up to serious heart problems

'Too much salt increases risk of strokes and heart attacks'

COMMENT

TRACY PARKER

Senior dietician at the BHF

MOST of us would never dream of eating 22 bags of crisps in a day, yet that is the equivalent amount of salt the average person consumes every 24 hours.

This is a serious concern for our heart health. Eating too much salt raises blood pressure, a major cause of heart attacks and strokes.

Around 30% of adults already have high blood pressure and millions don't even know it. Reducing salt intake is one of the simplest and most effective ways to lower this risk, yet awareness of the recommended daily limit is worryingly low.

The potential gains are huge. We could prevent up to 135,000 cases of coronary heart disease over 14 years if we reduced salt consumption to meet World Health Organisation guidelines. That's why we need to act now.

The government's Healthy Food Standard will require a change in how food is sold, promoted and developed.

It's crucial for the nation's heart health this new standard drives food manufacturers to reduce salt in their products.

Every day we delay means more people are unknowingly putting their hearts under strain. Reducing salt isn't just about numbers – it's about saving lives.

EXPRESS VOTE

Should food industry face legally binding targets on salt content?

YES: 0901 133 4440
NO: 0901 133 4441

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Yes text DXYES to 63333
No text DXNO to 63333

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Pride in NHS workers for carrying on

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**

HEALTH service boss Sir Jim Mackey has paid tribute to staff who battled through doctors' strikes before Christmas to maintain 95% of planned care.

The British Medical Association's five-day walkout during one of the busiest times of the year was widely condemned by politicians and health leaders.

In a letter to staff, Sir Jim said: "I am incredibly proud of our NHS staff who worked through the festive period to help thousands of people return home from hospital during Christmas week.

"Despite this effort the NHS has not headed into the New Year in victory mode, with demand remaining high which will no doubt increase on the back of a cold snap."

He urged the public to call 999 and visit A&E in emergencies, and use the NHS 111 service where appropriate.

NHS data shows 3,167 elective procedures and more than 30,000 outpatient appointments were rescheduled due to the strike, with more than 25,000 doctors absent.

Online docs will target menopause

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**

MENOPAUSE and prostate problems will be among nine conditions prioritised by the NHS's "online hospital" when it launches next year.

The service will allow patients to be triaged, speak to doctors by video call, and be monitored at their homes.

It is expected to deliver up to 8.5 million virtual appointments and assessments in the first three years – four times more than an average NHS trust.

Conditions topping the list include glaucoma, retina problems, cataracts, inflammatory bowel disease and iron deficiency anaemia.

Prostate enlargement, raised PSA hormone levels, menopause and menstrual problems, which may be a sign of endometriosis, will also be covered by the web service.

Prof Stella Vig, national clinical director for elective care at NHS England, said: "These conditions can be painful, so faster diagnosis will have a real impact." Health chiefs stressed that patients will always have the choice of face-to-face appointments with medics.

OUSTED LEADER DEFIANT

Maduro: I'm innocent...

BY **MARTYN BROWN**
Political Editor

VENEZUELA'S deposed president Nicolas Maduro was shackled but defiant yesterday as he made his first public comments since being taken to the US.

He declared himself "innocent" and a "decent man" as he pleaded not guilty to federal drug trafficking charges in a New York court.

Maduro said in Spanish: "I am the president of Venezuela, I consider myself a prisoner of war. I was captured at my home in Caracas."

He also told 92-year-old veteran judge Alvin Hellerstein: "I'm innocent. I am not guilty. I am a decent man, the president of my country."

Maduro was appearing on narco-terrorism charges the US administration believes justify capturing him and bringing him to the US.

His feet shackled and wearing a blue and beige jail uniform with orange slippers, Maduro, 63, and his wife Cilia Flores were led into the courtroom at around noon.

The 30-minute proceedings, not on camera, are likely to be just the start of a prolonged legal fight over whether he can stand trial in the US. The couple put on headsets to hear the English hearing translated.

Flores, 69, also pleaded not guilty, saying she was "completely innocent" after stating: "I am Cilia Flores Maduro, I am the first lady of Venezuela." At the end, Maduro turned to wave at the gallery, from where a tearful member of the public told him: "You will pay on behalf of Venezuela."

Handcuffed

In response, Maduro said: "In the name of God, I will be free."

The prisoners were then escorted across the city by heavy security back to their cells. They will next appear in court on March 17.

The couple were earlier transported under armed guard from the Brooklyn detention centre to the Manhattan courthouse.

Handcuffed and wearing prison clothes, they were seen being bundled into a helicopter to fly across the East River.

The chopper landed at a Manhattan heliport, where Maduro, limping, was loaded into an armoured truck to be taken to the courthouse, just around the corner from the one where Donald Trump was convicted in 2024 of falsifying business records.

Maduro was represented in court by Barry Pollack, a renowned attorney who recently negotiated a plea agreement that led to the release of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Maduro's lawyers are expected to contest the legality of his arrest, arguing that he is immune from prosecution as a sovereign head of a foreign state.

The US doesn't recognise him as Venezuela's legitimate leader – particularly after his much-disputed 2024 re-election.

Maduro, along with his wife, son and three others, is accused of working with drug cartels to facilitate the shipment of thousands of tons of cocaine into the US. They face life in prison if convicted.

Meanwhile, at the United Nations, officials and US foes slammed the US intervention.

Despite Moscow's full invasion of Ukraine nearly four years ago, Vasily Nebenzya, the Russian ambassador to the UN, blasted: "We cannot allow the United States to proclaim itself as some kind of a supreme judge, which alone bears the right to invade any country, to label culprits, to hand down and to enforce punishments irrespective of notions of international law, sovereignty and non-intervention".

In response, US ambassador Mike Waltz defended the military action as a justified "surgical law enforcement operation".

Venezuela's ambassador Samuel Moncada said his country was the target of "an illegitimate armed attack" that was "lacking any legal justification". Maduro's son Nicolas appeared at Venezuela's National Assembly in his first public appearance since his father was captured.

He referred to his father as "President Maduro" and called for his release to loud cheers.

Meanwhile, vice-president Delcy Rodriguez was formally sworn in as interim leader yesterday.

She continued to rail against the US action despite having vowed to work with the Trump administration the day before.

In the UK, Prime Minister Keir Starmer insisted that "no tears would be shed" about the removal of Maduro from power.

But he refused to follow France, Spain and Canada in saying the US had violated international law.

He said: "The framework, the anchor, has to be international law. Obviously the US will want to justify its actions. It's a complicated

Venezuelans for and against Maduro argue outside New York court. Inset, Donald Trump. Below, armoured transport to court for the Maduros

Starmer still waiting for Trump talks

BY **JONATHAN WALKER** Whitehall Editor

KEIR Starmer had still not spoken to Donald Trump last night about the situation in Venezuela or US threats against Denmark.

Downing Street attempted to play down the snub, suggesting that more junior figures in the US and UK had been in discussions.

But the Prime Minister yesterday risked angering the US president after declaring he "stands" with Denmark following Mr Trump's threats to annex Greenland.

Sir Keir voiced his support for the Scandinavian nation after the White House signalled it could now launch military action in the self-governing Danish territory after the US operation in Venezuela. Sir Keir was asked by reporters about Mette Frederiksen, his Danish counterpart, who insisted Mr Trump has no right to claim the island.

The PM said: "Well, I stand with her and she's right about the future of Greenland. Denmark is a close ally in Europe, it is a Nato ally and it's very important the future of Greenland is only for Greenland and the kingdom of Denmark."

Ms Frederiksen had earlier called on Mr Trump to stop making threats to take over Greenland. She said: "I strongly urge the US to stop the threats against a close ally and against another country and another people, who have very clearly said that they are not for sale."

Meanwhile, sources said Mr Trump and Sir Keir could talk following a summit in Paris today involving the "coalition of the willing", a group of mainly European nations planning to offer security guarantees to Ukraine if the Russian invasion ends.

The PM told the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg in an interview recorded on Saturday and broadcast on Sunday: "We need to establish the full picture. I then need to speak to President Trump, I need to speak to our allies. I want to get all the material facts together."

The Prime Minister said on Saturday he wanted talks

IN NEW YORK COURT

president of my country

Nicolas Maduro and wife Cilia Flores land in Manhattan. Right, sketch of pair in court. Inset below, Denmark's PM Mette Frederiksen and Foreign SecretaryYvette Cooper

ANALYSIS

MARTYN BROWN
Political Editor

KEIR Starmer the contortionist was at his pliant best as he got himself into a global diplomatic tangle.

The Prime Minister was so desperate not to offend anyone – most notably Donald Trump – that he ended up offending almost everyone.

Sir Keir, wisely, doesn't want to get on the wrong side of the US president following Saturday's raid on Venezuela.

He repeatedly dodged saying whether he believed America had broken the law with the extraordinary seizure of Nicolas Maduro from Caracas.

Threatening

But his wriggling, squirming and fence-sitting has dismayed pretty much everyone from the Labour backbenches to Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

After failing to give a straight answer about the South American nation, Sir Keir set his sights northwards – urging Trump to stop threatening to seize Greenland.

Oops. That's not expected to go down too well in the White House.

The Prime Minister will have to do some serious verbal-contortionism if, as expected, he speaks to president Trump on the phone today.

situation. The most important thing at the moment is that peaceful transition to democracy."

Sir Keir said he is likely to talk to Mr Trump after a meeting of the Coalition of the Willing, the group of Ukraine's allies, today.

But he has come under pressure from Labour MPs to condemn the military action. Emily Thornberry, who chairs the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, said yesterday: "I'm not going to pretend this isn't difficult. And it is important that we keep a very important ally like America on board. We have, particularly, Ukraine and the interests of Ukraine that we need to consider. But it's meaningless if we don't support international law.

"I don't think we can just look away and say nothing."

Liverpool Riverside MP Kim Johnson questioned whether the UK still stood for "international law and sovereignty". But Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper told MPs in the Commons she had "raised the importance of complying with international law" with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. She added: "We have promoted and maintained support for international law.

"We will continue to urge all partners to do so at every stage. It is, of course, for the US to set out the legal basis for their actions."

The Tory leader Kemi Badenoch accused Sir Keir of "dithering" and added on X: "The events in Venezuela have shown that the Prime Minister is on the outside looking in, not respected abroad or at home." The removal of Maduro is seen as the most assertive US operation to achieve regime change since the 2003 invasion of Iraq and it followed months of pressure on Venezuela from Washington.

But the Trump administration has not indicated support for replacing the ruling regime with a government led by Maduro's popular opposition rival Maria Corina Machado, who won the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize.

Sir Steve Webb issued alert

Huge rise in tax office demands to pensioners

BY **STEPH SPYRO**

THERE has been a big surge in the number of pensioners being sent tax demands by HMRC, a former pensions minister has warned.

Sir Steve Webb found that the tax office sent demands to more than 1.3 million people in 2023/24, nearly double the number just two years earlier.

Nearly a quarter of these were for sums under £100, while another quarter were for over £1,000, a Freedom of Information Act request revealed.

Highlighting the effects of a stealth tax and pension rate rises, Sir Steve, a partner at pension consultants LCP, said: "For many people, having to deal with the tax office is a hassle they can do without.

"But the continued freezing of the income tax personal allowance means that the numbers getting unwelcome end-of-year tax demands have soared.

Solution

"Many of these people will be pensioners whose only income is the state pension, and they now get an annual tax demand, with the amounts growing each year.

"Although the government has indicated it may address this issue for a subset of pensioners from 2027, a much wider-ranging solution is needed."

The main reasons for the surge in numbers are the freeze in the tax threshold, which has been stuck at £12,570 since 2021/22.

There has also been a large increase in the amount of state pension, including a rise of 10.1% in April 2023.

Sir Steve said that with the state pension having risen a further 13% between April 2023 and April 2025, the number of people receiving these end-of-year tax demands is likely to have increased further to pass the two million mark.

Kemi throws out deal with Reform, accusing Farage of 'saying whatever to whoever' to get power

Leader Kemi Badenoch has ruled out an electoral pact with Reform, led by Nigel Farage, inset

BY **AARON NEWBURY**

KEMI Badenoch has torpedoed any prospect of a Conservative-Reform deal at the next election as she launched a blistering attack on Nigel Farage's party.

The Conservative Party leader tore into Mr Farage yesterday during a combative appearance on ITV's Good Morning Britain, accusing him of "saying whatever to whoever" in a bid to seize power.

Mrs Badenoch ruled out striking a deal with the right-wing party four times, insisting the Tories would not sell out their principles for votes.

Her rejection came despite a devastating new poll showing that Reform could nearly wipe out the Conservatives at the next election.

The survey of 16,000 voters by More in Common predicted that Reform would secure 381 seats, with the Tories facing a stark loss of some 51 seats, dropping down to hold just 71. The poll predicted a bloodbath for Mrs Badenoch's top team, with senior Tories including James Cleverly and Robert Jenrick losing their seats.

'This is not the time to be talking about any sort of deal'

Despite the dire numbers, the Tory leader was defiant when challenged by Susanna Reid on a possible pact.

She said: "Absolutely not. This is not the time to be talking about any sorts of deals. What I am interested in is getting the country working, not just getting back in for its own sake."

Mrs Badenoch blasted Reform for having no concrete plans and not being a "conservative" party, saying Mr Farage wants to "spend more money on welfare" while her party aimed to slash it".

She savaged Reform's "random" policies saying they were talking about "nationalising Rolls-Royce, nationalising oil and gas", adding the Tories are "not a nationalisation party". The Tory leader painted a bleak picture of Britain's struggling high streets, warning family businesses are "terrified" of Labour's plans.

She said: "Our high streets are closing down, businesses are screaming..." Mrs Badenoch pledged to abolish stamp duty and scrap business rates on the high street in a bid to help town centres.

Ruling out a pact was welcomed by some in the party, with one source saying Mrs Badenoch was "right to do so".

But another senior figure added the party "may need to revisit talks of a pact nearer the election". They said that the possibility of a Green-Labour deal was "frightening" meaning the Tories should not "rule out completely" a deal with Reform. But a Reform UK spokesman said: "There will be no deals with a party that unleashed record mass immigration, trashed the economy, and whose leader – Kemi Badenoch – was right at the centre of every disastrous decision."

71
Conservative MPs after next election according to a new poll

Starmer feelgood factor is a flop

Keir Starmer at a community centre in Reading

SIR Keir Starmer's latest relaunch was already in tatters last night as industry leaders and his own MPs warned the cost of living crisis will continue in 2026.

The Prime Minister yesterday vowed this would be the year "people begin to feel the difference in their pockets, in the ability to pay the bill", as he visited a community centre in Reading to highlight a freeze in

Stalled

rail fares. He said: "2026 is the year that we're going to be turning a corner." And he will today urge colleagues to focus on policies that raise living standards, when he chairs a meeting of his Cabinet in No10.

But shops said checkout prices would continue to rise in 2026, and a left-leaning think-tank said household incomes had stalled.

Labour backbenchers also issued a blunt warning that the cost of living crisis has not been fixed. And pubs and restaurants are also braced for a dire 12 months as cash-strapped customers stay away. A survey by the British Chambers of Commerce found four in 10 bosses in pubs, restaurants and hotels expect turnover to fall in the next 12 months.

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**

David Bharier, the chambers' head of research, said: "Firms tell us they are worried about tax, struggling to invest and fear they'll have to put their prices up in the months ahead."

The British Retail Consortium, which represents shops, said food prices will continue to rise in 2026 after checkout bills went up 3.3% last year.

Chief executive Helen Dickinson said: "Increased public policy costs and regulation will likely keep inflation sticky."

But household incomes will barely increase, with think-tank the Resolution Foundation warning of "lacklustre real wage growth, and rising tax bills".

Sir Keir is under pressure from Labour MPs, including former Transport Secretary Louise Haigh, to veer to the left.

She signed a statement from the centre-left Tribune group of backbenchers which said the causes of the cost of living crisis "have not yet been fixed".

TO READ ALL THE BEST POLITICAL STORIES OF THE DAY GO TO EXPRESS.CO.UK/POLITICS

PC is on trial after suspect was crippled

BY **ELLIE CRABBE**

A MAN who fell from a wall after being Tasered by a police officer is now confined to a wheelchair, a court has been told.

Leonard Sandiford, 61, was running from police called to an attempted burglary at a betting shop when he climbed on to an outbuilding.

PC Liam Newman, 31, is accused of GBH against Mr Sandiford, who is tetraplegic after he fell five to six feet in Woodford Green, East London, on April 24, 2022.

Jurors were told the prosecution case is that Newman firing the Taser in the circumstances was an unreasonable use of force and unlawful.

Prosecutor Irshad Sheikh said at Southwark crown court: "A person being incapacitated in these circumstances would inevitably lead to the risk of an uncontrolled and unsupported fall.

"The risk of injury should have been obvious to PC Newman." He denies grievous bodily harm and the trial continues.

£430k fund for father in fire tragedy

BY **FILIPA GASAPAR**

A FUNDRAISER for a father who lost his wife and two children in a house fire is nearing £430,000.

Tom Shearman, a police officer, escaped the blaze which engulfed his property in Stroud, Gloucestershire, at 3am on Boxing Day.

Tragically, he could not save seven-year-old Eve, four-year-old Ohner and their mother, Fionnghuala Shearman.

A GoFundMe page has now raised around £430,000 and Mr Shearman thanked the local community for the "out of this world generosity" he has received during his "darkest of hours".

He added: "Three of the greatest humans to ever grace our presence were taken from not just me, but all of us.

"I cannot begin to describe the anguish and trauma of the events of Boxing Day 2025."

He said he now has plans to ensure the family's legacy lives on.

Investigations into the cause of the blaze are continuing.

Amorim's laughing as he's sacked by Man Utd

Boss due £12m payout after dismal reign

BY **CHRIS RICHES**

RUBEN Amorim looked like the weight of Old Trafford had finally been lifted as he strolled with his wife hours after his sacking as Manchester United manager.

He arrived in November 2024 from Sporting Lisbon to a huge fanfare.

Yet yesterday morning, after blasting the board in an extraordinary rant, the club announced he was gone.

Hours later the beaming 40-year-old – now due up to £12million in compensation – and wife Maria Joao Diogo stepped out of their Cheshire mansion wearing huge grins.

And it was claimed he left the club's training ground laughing and joking alongside his departing coaching staff.

It is claimed Amorim had been told United's squad, bolstered by £250m of summer recruitment, was good enough to win far more matches and play in a more attacking style than they were achieving.

Startling

But after Sunday's 1-1 draw away at Leeds United, Amorim launched into a startling rant highlighting a rift with the club's hierarchy.

He fumed: "I came here to be the manager of Manchester United, not to be the coach. I am the manager of Manchester United and it's going to be like this for 18 months or when the board decides to change.

"I'm not going to quit. I will do my job until the other guy is coming here to replace me. And that is going to finish in 18 months and then everyone is going to move on.

"That was the deal, that is my job, not to be a coach. If people cannot handle the Gary Nevilles, the criticism, everything… We need to change the club.

"In every department, the scouting department, the sporting director needs to do his job, and I will do mine for 18 months and then we move on." Former United midfielder and current Under 18s coach Darren Fletcher has been installed as caretaker manager for tomorrow's trip to Burnley. Amorim has been in charge at Old Trafford for 14 months during a turbulent period in which United endured their worst season in more than half a century.

He leaves with the club behind the frontrunners in the Premier League. The lowest ebb came during United's shock defeat by League Two side Grimsby Town in the Carabao Cup last August.

Yesterday the club said: "With Manchester United sixth in the Premier League, the club's leadership has reluctantly made the decision that it is the right time to make a change."

OPINION: PAGE 12

Ruben Amorim and wife Maria outside their Cheshire home hours after he was fired by club

Amorim's side lost to lowly Grimsby

Brigitte Macron tormentors guilty of bullying

Emmanuel and Brigitte Macron

TEN online trolls who accused French first lady Brigitte Macron of being "a paedophile" who was "born a man" were yesterday convicted of cyber-bulling and handed prison sentences.

The eight men and two women were tried in Paris in October for spreading the rumours on social media platforms.

Judge Thierry Donnard yesterday declared all guilty at the Paris Criminal Court, and handed down nine suspended prison terms, and one full six-month one.

All were also ordered to pay damages to the 72-year-old wife of French president Emmanuel Macron, 48.

The court ruled that "aggravated psychological harassment" was clearly established, and that the posts had "resulted in a deterioration of Brigitte Macron's standard of living" and that "the deterioration of her physical and mental health was proven".

BY **PETER ALLEN** in Paris

Aurélien Poirson-Atlan, known by the pseudonym Zoé Sagan on social media, was sentenced to a suspended eight months for a series of messages on X.

He was absent for the verdict, as were most of the other defendants.

Only two of them, Bertrand Scholler and clairvoyant Delphine Jegousse, alias Amandine Roy, were present.

The six-month jail term was handed down to a defendant referred to as Jean-Christophe P. Trial evidence revealed that Ms Macron had read every word of the "whirlwind of online abuse".

Her daughter, Tiphaine Auzière, 41, told how her mother was "constantly under attack and it affected her enormously". She added: "There has been change and deterioration. My mother always has to be careful about how she dresses and behaves in public because of this fake news. She can't ignore all the horrors said about her."

Those on trial denied any wrongdoing, saying that Mrs Macron was a public figure, and they had the right of free speech. Mrs Macron had chosen to stay away from the trial.

Dame Judi leads bid to save woods with Chelsea garden

Artist's impression of garden

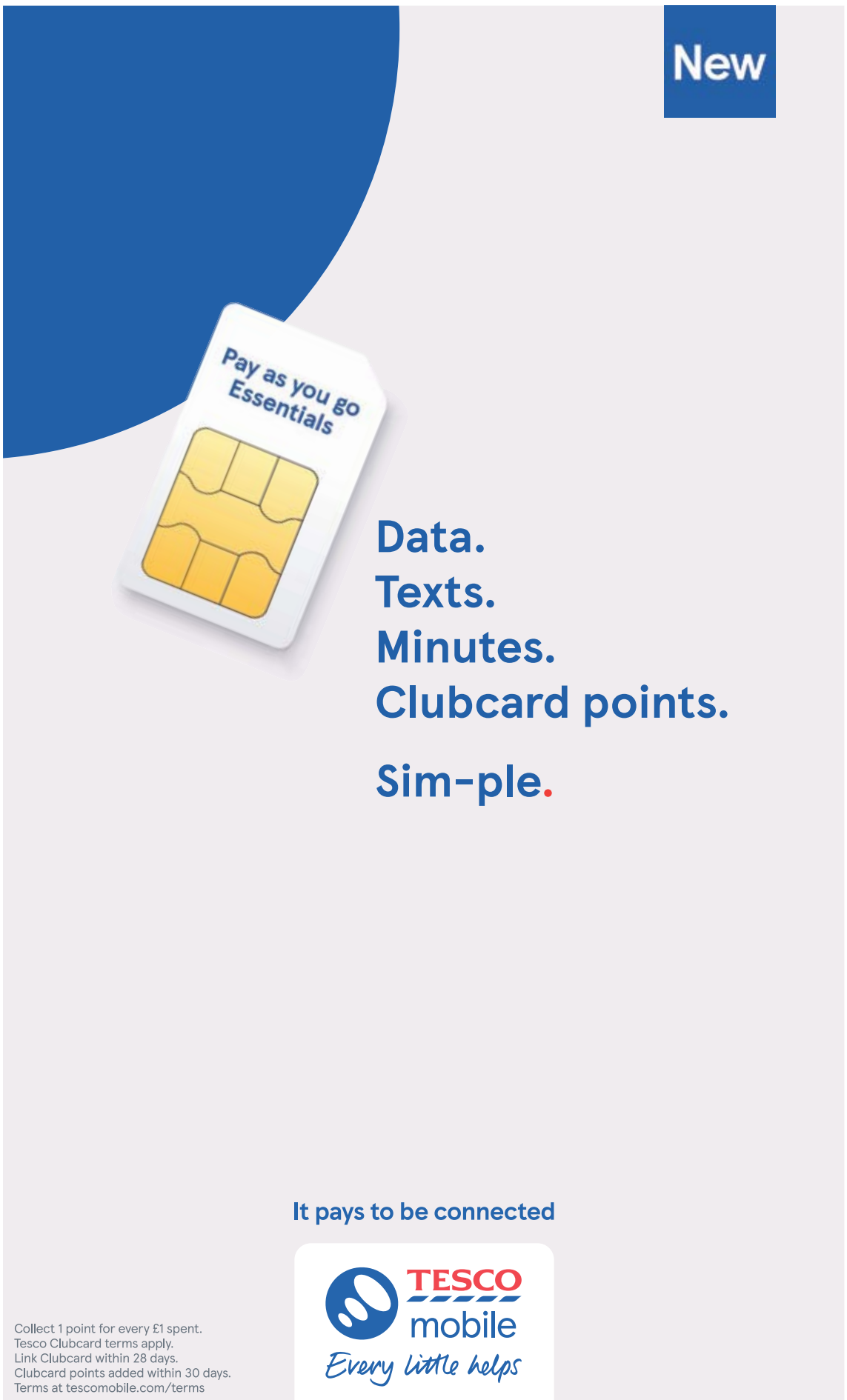
THE fight to save the UK's "forgotten forests" – ancient woodlands buried under conifer plantations – is being highlighted by Dame Judi Dench and a garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.

Designed by Ashleigh Aylett, The Woodland Trust's design is among the show gardens unveiled for May's event, alongside exhibits on youth mental health, protecting bats and hedgerows, and managing water.

The trust's plot highlights its work to save woodlands that were felled for plantations of non-native conifers to boost timber supplies after the Second World War. More than 900 square miles of original broadleaf woodlands lie under these plantations, with the seeds and soils still dormant. Restoring them has become an urgent task as they will not survive another cycle of conifer crops, the charity said.

Trust ambassador Dame Judi Dench said the "inspiring and immersive garden is a vital reminder of what our irreplaceable ancient woodlands give us: peace, beauty and a thriving home for countless rare species".

BY **EMILY BEAMENT**



Sarah Snook accepts best actress award for TV series All Her Fault, above. A big grin from Stephen Graham, left, with his gong for best actor in a limited series for Adolescence

Erin Doherty wins best supporting actress for playing psychologist Briony Ariston in the Netflix worldwide hit

'The Bikers were plural. There's no Hairy Bikers without my mate Dave...it's done'

Si King on new railway show

Adolescence is critics' choice

Owen Cooper thanks everyone who has changed his and his family's life as he accepts his Critics Choice award

Stephen and Owen, who grew close playing a dad and his troubled son, celebrate backstage

TEENAGE star Owen Cooper picks up a prize for his role in Adolescence as the Netflix drama scoops four Critics Choice Awards.

The 16-year-old won best supporting actor in a limited series for his debut as a 13-year-old boy accused of murder.

Co-stars Stephen Graham, 52, and Erin Doherty, 33, won best actor and best supporting actress and the show was voted best limited series.

Accepting his award Owen, who got an Emmy last year, said: "Thank you to the critics and to everyone behind the scenes who made this night possible. This past year has been a complete whirlwind for me and my family. It's changed our lives for ever. We cherish every single moment of it."

Other winners at the starry event in Santa Monica, California, included Sarah Snook, 38, who got best actress in a limited series for mystery thriller All Her Fault.

And Marty Supreme star Timothee Chalamet, 30, gushed "I love you" to girlfriend Kylie Jenner, 28, as he collected his best film actor trophy from Kate Hudson, 46.

BY **JASMINE ALLDAY**

SI King says The Hairy Bikers concept will not be revived after the death of best mate Dave Myers.

So he has found a different mode of transport in his new series – trains.

The pair shared a passion for food and motorbikes but their partnership came to a heartbreaking end in 2024, when Dave died at 66 following a battle with cancer.

Si, 59, said: "It's done. That's it. The Bikers were plural. There's no Hairy Bikers without my mate."

Memory

He told the Radio Times: "He doesn't stop being your best mate just because he's passed away.

"That's never going to go. We were like brothers – we drove each other mad, because we were two very different people, but absolutely adored each other.

"So nobody's ever going to take his place. I don't want to look in the rear-view mirror of my motorcycle and see anyone else there. It's Dave, you know? And I drove hundreds of miles looking at his ugly arse. That's my memory, that's what I want to keep. That's what it was about."

The pair, *below*, starred in cooking shows including The Hairy Bikers' Cookbook and The Hairy Dieters, creating more than 30 series together.

Now the presenter is looking ahead to his new Channel Four show, Britain's Favourite Railway Stations with Si King – his first major solo project since Dave's death.

A passionate railway enthusiast, Si will meet the staff who keep Britain's railways running. The programme will showcase engineering achievements on a rail network with more than 2,600 stations.

Si said: "You have to move forward, but the only way you can do that is by cherishing memories."

BY **JENNIE BUZAGLO**

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Be good to yourself and cut down on salt intake

NO warning should be required. We are eating too much salt and need to cut down. So it's disheartening to read that millions of Britons are still consuming unhealthy amounts that increase the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes.

Astonishing analysis by the British Heart Foundation found that people in England are eating the equivalent of 155 crisp packets' worth of salt per week.

On average, working age adults typically eat 8.4g of salt per day.

That's 40% more than the recommended maximum of 6g.

Eating too much salt can cause extra water to be drawn into the bloodstream, leading to high blood pressure.

Over time, this puts a strain on the heart and blood vessels, increasing the risk of problems such as heart attack, stroke and vascular dementia.

Around one in three UK adults are thought to have high blood pressure, with as many as five million unaware.

A long-awaited watershed for junk food advertising has now come into force, banning adverts on TV before 9pm and anytime online.

It applies to adverts for food high in fat, salt and sugar such as soft drinks, pizza, chocolates and sweets.

But these warnings have been around for years.

What we need, aside from supermarkets and food manufacturers taking significant action, is cultural change.

So please, make it your New Year's resolution and cut back on salt.

No sliding on ECHR vow

SHABANA Mahmood talks a good game but she must follow through on her promise to take on the European Court of Human Rights over the Shamima Begum case.

As exclusively revealed by this newspaper, the jihadi bride's hopes of leaving Syria were revived after the European judges challenged Britain's stance in the bombshell case.

Overseeing the European Convention on Human Rights, the judges formally told the Home Office to justify its decision to strip the ISIS fanatic of her British citizenship. But the Home Secretary insisted the government would continue to defend its position, saying that every UK court had ruled the move legal.

As with her tougher measures on tackling the small boats crisis, let's hope her robust rhetoric means that Begum is never allowed to return to the UK. She chose to get involved in terrorism and must live with the consequences.

This is also another glaring example of why the UK should cut ties with the Convention altogether. But perhaps that is a step too far for this Labour government.

Amorim's pay-off win

HAPPINESS is a man relieved of the biggest burden in domestic football – the Manchester United job.

Ruben Amorim was grinning like a Cheshire cat outside his home in Cheshire yesterday.

It's no wonder the Portuguese coach was smiling despite being sacked by the Red Devils – he's expected to pocket a multi-million pound pay-off.

Nice money if you can get it!

Vital children fall back in love with reading books

One-to-one reading sessions can help boost confidence and aid self-expression

Sally Wrampling
Guest Columnist

CHILDREN'S enjoyment of reading is at its lowest point in 20 years – with just one in three youngsters choosing to read for pleasure. This alarming statistic is resulting in a quarter of all primary school leavers failing to reach expected standards of reading.

Child illiteracy leads to problems in adulthood – one in six adults are functionally illiterate and may struggle to read a medicine packet, bus timetables or fill in job applications. Poor literacy is also a factor behind societal problems like homelessness, poor physical and mental health and criminality.

As we start 2026, ministers hope to kick-start a reading revolution by launching the National Year of Reading – to rally parents, schools, libraries, businesses and the wider community to adopt daily reading habits – "reading by example" – to improve literacy outcomes.

And Schoolreaders is pledging to deliver 1.5 million one-to-one reading sessions in schools across England

By helping children develop a love of reading, our charity aims to improve literacy levels and give more children the skills they need for a brighter future, especially in disadvantaged areas.

As the country's largest in-school child literacy charity, we've supported a record number of face-to-face reading sessions – reaching more than one million last year. This amounted to the highest number of sessions delivered in a single academic year in its history.

WITH access to one in five primary schools across England, we already connect more than 3,500 volunteers to 35,000 children a week to help build essential literacy skills. Our pledge to go even further, by achieving 1.5 million reading sessions in 2026 – a 50% increase on last year's total – is a bold response to the government's call to create a "nation of readers".

As a charity, we believe that every child deserves the chance to learn to read well. Without reading, learning opportunities are denied. By providing dedicated volunteers to share valuable and regular one-on-one reading time we aim to help reverse the decline in reading.

When volunteer Carolyn first heard about Schoolreaders, she felt it was the perfect way to share her love of books and help children discover the magic of reading. Three years on, she still travels to her local primary school every week, where she listens to between 10 and 12 children from Years One and Two read aloud.

Carolyn brings to the role a wealth of experience from her time as a family court judge. Working in the legal sector, she supported families and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, experience she now draws on to help children develop confidence and skills through reading.

She says: "In my career I have often had to sit behind children and young people in dreadful situations. Many families I worked with had a disadvantaged background, often including poor literacy not only among children, but their parents too. Now, it is great to have the chance to sit beside children and help them to learn a skill which will set them up for better opportunities in life."

When Aleksander arrived in the UK from Ukraine, he spoke very little English. Starting school in a completely new country without reading skills or language skills was daunting, but he soon met Carolyn who began listening to him read every week. With her steady encouragement and gentle support, Aleksander began to find his voice and is now passing his love of reading to his younger sister. "At first, Aleksander would barely speak," Carolyn recalls. "He was shy and hesitant, often looking to others for help with every word. But he was determined. Week by week, his vocabulary grew and, with it, his confidence."

AS ALEKSANDER's English improved through his weekly reading sessions with Carolyn, so did his love of books. He was soon sharing stories. His sister is now also confident in English and doing well with literacy.

Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than family circumstances, educational background or income, Schoolreaders' sessions don't just improve children's reading skills, they also boost confidence and help children discover the joy of books and the pleasure of sharing stories.

● *Sally Wrampling is Chief Executive Officer of Schoolreaders. To support the Schoolreaders Pledge during the National Year of Reading, donate or become a volunteer via schoolreaders.org/national-year-of-reading*

'Poor literacy is a factor behind some of our societal problems'

Esther McVey

The voice of common sense

Jobs shelved for unemployed youth

LABOUR'S employment tsar and former Blairite Cabinet Minister Alan Milburn has said something needs to be done about youth unemployment.

Milburn, below, has complained that the huge reduction in Saturday jobs for 16 and 17-year-olds has made them less ready for work as adults.

As it happens, I agree with him, but it's this Labour Party

that's hugely adding to the problem.

One reason why there are fewer job opportunities for teenagers is the minimum wage – now up to £8-an-hour for 16-year-olds.

Many small shops, for example, simply cannot afford it.

I somehow doubt Labour will be prepared to countenance tackling that particular shibboleth given ideology and dogma always trumps pragmatism amongst socialists.

That would be one brave Phil-ibuster

ELON Musk's AI vehicle Grok certainly has a sense of humour. I recently noticed on X that someone jokingly suggested that my husband Phil might become part of the management team at Everton football club – which would be pretty brave given that my dad and I are staunch Liverpool fans!

Grok replied to the suggestion with: "The filibustering MP as Everton's endurance coach – his stamina could outlast any match!" I shudder to think what it would say about me!

Keir leading Brits to Starmergeddon

THE best thing Labour MPs could do for us all in 2026 is remove Keir Starmer as their leader before he completely destroys the country. In little more than 18 months he has taken the UK from First World to Third World – and to a crumbling country most Brits no longer recognise.

Mr Slippery has overseen the slip-slide of the UK in record time. He has taken us from the country with the highest levels of investment in the G7 to the lowest; from one that's moving up the educational league tables to one going into reverse; through two disastrous tax-hiking, binge-borrowing, benefit-bonanza Budgets, and he's managed to crush the spirit of working Brits and got the country's wealth creators moving out in despair. The latest, UK's ninth richest man, John Fredriksen, left saying that Britain had gone to hell.

It's not just rising taxes that has got Brits leaving – bad though that is. Many say they don't feel valued as British citizens and the government has lost control of the streets. The crime index – which measures the citizen perception of crime – clearly backs that up. Incredibly, there are three UK cities – Bradford, Coventry and Birmingham – in the top four most dangerous cities in Europe.

But it is Starmer's failure to tackle illegal immigration – up 13% in 2025 – and his neverending capacity to put the human rights of people breaking into the country above those of his own citizens which has upset the public more than anything – even more than his lies and broken election promises.

His much vaunted "smash the gangs" and "one in, one out" policies have proved to be turkeys and his latest reported proposal, to build council houses specifically for illegal migrants, will have decent law-abiding Brits, subjected to years on housing waiting lists, taking to the streets.

Labour MPs know that Starmer's finished, his current poll ratings are a catastrophic -54, the worst of any Prime Minister since records began.

For months backbenchers, along with some in the Cabinet and that Manchester windbag Andy Burnham, have plotted to get rid of him.

But the threshold of 80 MPs having to put their heads above the parapet to start the removal process has proved too much for this weak bunch. Remember none even had the guts to vote against Starmer when he broke his election pledge and took winter fuel payments off 10 million OAPs.

But if Labour MPs are to stand any chance of survival at the next General Election, they need to find a backbone and start standing up for their voters. Their collective new year resolution has to be to get some courage and remove Starmer. If they don't and they inflict another three years of him on the country, they will never be forgiven by their constituents, and they won't just be getting booted out of pubs, they'll all be getting booted out of Parliament too.

Smiley Kylie is a billion-dollar babe

KYLIE Jenner's a very modern media babe. She is as shrewd as she is beautiful. Currently seen on every red carpet and in every magazine, each pose she makes boosts the value of her cosmetic and clothing companies, currently valued at a cool billion dollars. No wonder she's always smiling.

DO YOU remember Boris Johnson's Brexit bus pledging to give the NHS an extra £350m a week if the UK voted to leave the EU?

All the remoaners called it a lie, and continue to do so. Well, next time you hear an EU loving bore going on about this, make sure you tell them the facts.

In 2015/16 the NHS received £3billion a week. In 2025/26 it now gets £4billion a week. So £350m was indeed inaccurate.

The NHS has had a much bigger rise than that – an extra £1,000 million more per week than it was before we voted to exit the EU – three times more than the referendum promise.

An inconvenient truth for the BBC and the lefty establishment.

YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE THIS IS JUST THE THIN END OF THE PLEDGE

I HAVE been wondering what will be the next manifesto pledge this wretched government shamelessly breaks. Perhaps we could run a sweepstake. My money's on the pledge Starmer made in his manifesto of "no return to the Single Market, Customs Union or freedom of movement".

It shows how little Labour MPs care for their election promises that so many are brazenly saying that the country should rejoin the EU Customs Union despite standing on an election commitment not to do that.

It makes you question whether Labour has been destroying the economy deliberately to try to make it more politically attractive to rejoin the EU by the back door.

The question is no longer whether Starmer believed in every thing in his 2024 election manifesto. It is now a question whether he believed in anything that was in it.

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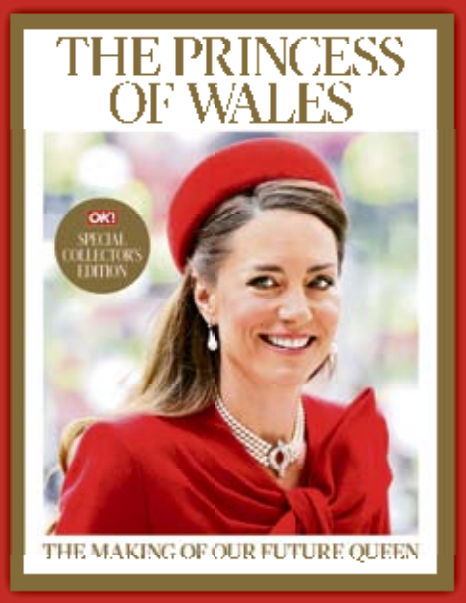

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61505766

Mieka Smiles

Local Matters

I CAN still remember my first day at primary school in England. As I swung around my neon pink Puma bag (from Argos, no less – a total revelation to an Aussie) my new classmates demanded I say things in my Australian accent, and asked, of course, if I knew Kylie and Jason.

Despite my mum being Middlesbrough born and bred, I was born in Australia and lived the first eight years of my life there, before my parents decided to move back to Britain in 1990. What a culture shock. But within just a few short months, the antipodean lilt disappeared and I've never once hankered after the place I was born. I adore my country and I'm proud to call it home. I'm British and that's that.

So I was astonished to find the results of a poll – reported in The Guardian – that a growing number of people said that, because I wasn't born here, I'm not a true Brit. The number who believe "Britishness" is something you are born with has almost doubled in two years. Around a third of people (36%) think a person must be born British to be truly British, according to a new YouGov poll, up from one in five (19%) in 2023.

Thankfully, the poll hadn't been accurately reported by the uptight lefty paper it appeared in, and in fact revealed once again what a tolerant and non-racist country Britain is. But, even if it were correct, I couldn't disagree more... too often debates about who is British and who isn't descend into shouting matches about ethnicity and tolerance. However, the real question is much simpler: contribution.

And rather than my unusual personal history muddying my stance on illegal migration, I think the argument as to why we must stand firm against the deluge of small boats is precisely because of our shared British values. A country built on fairness cannot function while some play by the rules and others don't.

Actually, it doesn't matter where you come from. I hold the very same views for those closer to home who unnecessarily strain our system by a lack of contribution. Yes, I absolutely believe in there being a safety net for people who need it to cover sickness or a terrible situation, but in the main, that should be time-limited and, above all, fair.

I'm not alone, as according to an analysis by the think tank Institute for Public Policy Research, which commissioned the poll, the majority also thought the nation was a civic community defined by shared values. When asked what made a good British citizen, the most popular answers were obeying the law, 64%, raising children to be kind, 62%, and working hard 48%.

So yes…a few may insist I'm not British because of where I was born. But I'll have something to say about it. Not just because my passport proves it, but because I love my country and believe in the same principles all true patriots do – graft, democracy and, above all, fairness.

TV SHOW Emily In Paris is one of my guilty pleasures. I even have a small claim to fame in that show superfan Rishi Sunak once complimented me on my phone case, which is the same as the show's starring character, played by Lily Collins.

But one element of it that inspires me is that the show's producer Darren Star has cast the beautiful Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, 62, as the indomitable Sylvie. She shines just as much as her younger, impossibly stylish cast.

At 44 I don't get the chance to say this very often now – but, in short, I want to be her when I grow up.

MY HUSBAND didn't grow up as a churchgoer – whereas, although I no longer attend church nearly as much as I should, I was a fully-fledged Sunday school pupil.

So, the other day, he asked me what a Jesus fish was.

I explained that in biblical times, those who were followers of the then-persecuted faith would draw a fish in the sand with a stick during conversations with other people. If the other person was also a Christian, they would take the stick and dot the eye.

It took me straight back to when we were attending church before getting married and he came out one morning saying how nice it was to shake hands with people and say how pleased he was to meet them.

I was totally baffled... but then the penny dropped – it was the part of the service when we all turned to each other and said "peace be with you!".

Oh I just love him. Brilliant.

mieka.smiles@reachplc.com

Attacker Jaidee Bingham, 18

Joking teens jailed after homeless man is killed

BY **EMILY PENNINK**

THREE teenagers who posed for selfies after killing a homeless man have been jailed.

Jaidee Bingham, 18, and his female accomplices Eymaiyah Lee Bradshaw-McKoy, 18, and Mia Campos-Jorge, 19, chased and beat up Anthony Marks, 51, on August 10, 2024.

He suffered a head injury with bleeding on the brain from which he died five weeks later.

Photos from the night featured the laughing teens, then aged 16 and 17, before and after their fatal attack near King's Cross station in London.

Drug dealer Bingham caused the fatal injury by striking Mr Marks over the head twice with a glass bottle after he had fallen to the ground.

Audio from a CCTV camera picked up male and female voices shouting: "Hit him again. Do it again.

"Have you learned your lesson yet?"

Selfies

As they made off in a car with false number plates, the youths were seen on videos, with Bingham boasting: "We messed up a man today."

The assault was said to have been a "punishment" beating after one of the young women, who were drug runners, was violently robbed. The victim was not the culprit but had refused to say who was.

Police identified the trio from CCTV footage and phone analysis.

Bingham, from Dagenham, got life with a minimum term of 16 years for murder.

Bradshaw-McKoy, from Brixton, got 47 months, and Campos-Jorge, from Tottenham, got 42 months in custody for manslaughter.

Det Inspector Jim Barry said: "They posed for selfies together, laughing about what they had done.

"There is a sense of justice that officers were able to use these to place them at the scene of the crime."

'Thank you, Grace, and Wonder Woman Lisa'

Joined by wife Lisa Faulkner at 2024 National Television Awards

Sacked MasterChef star John Torode on support of new host and his wife

BY **TOM BRYANT**

JOHN Torode has thanked new MasterChef host Grace Dent for standing by him in the wake of his sacking from the show.

John was axed after an allegation of using a racist term was upheld by the BBC, which he denies. He described Grace's support as unfailing and blasted his detractors as a "cult". Grace, 52, starred alongside John, 60, on Celebrity MasterChef 2025, which was filmed before he was sacked in July.

Writing on his Substack, he also called wife Lisa, 53, his rock and "Wonder Woman".

He said on Sunday: "Grace Dent: What a strong extraordinary woman. Grace stands up for all that she believes in and supports.

"Graceful and never scared of doing the right thing or worried that the cult might too ostracise her. It was a privilege to stand by her side. Her support unfailing."

He also said of Lisa, who he married in 2019 after meeting on Celebrity MasterChef: "My rock, my best friend, my love, my wife, a Wonder Woman. Nothing else needs to be said."

Complaint

Grace has previously stood by John, calling him "one of the kindest, most concerned, clever, thoughtful men that I know". She also showed support for him by posting a string of pictures together, after the Celebrity MasterChef final aired before Christmas.

Grace is currently filming her first edition of the regular MasterChef as its presenter, hosting alongside chef Anna Haugh.

John and his on-screen partner Gregg Wallace were both sacked in July.

The BBC upheld a complaint John used "an extremely offensive racist term" during production, which he denies. The BBC said: "This allegation...was investigated and substantiated by the independent investigation led by the law firm Lewis Silkin...

"John Torode's contract on MasterChef will not be renewed."

John has previously said therapy has helped him cope with the "brutal life-change" of his firing from MasterChef.

Gregg's dismissal followed a report that upheld more than 40 allegations about his conduct on the show, including one of unwelcome physical contact and three of being in a state of undress.

John and Grace on Celeb MasterChef

With former co-host Gregg Wallace

FREEDOM FOR UKRAINE

Putin strike on hospital taunts Trump peace bid

Russian strike on hospital in Kyiv after Trump rebuked Putin, inset

BY **WILL STEWART**

A HOSPITAL was hit in Kyiv as part of a deadly Russian barrage on Ukraine that taunted Donald Trump's peace efforts.

The body of a 30-year-old man was found inside after the flames were extinguished.

A 73-year-old man was also killed in the Kyiv region as his house was struck during the onslaught, which lasted overnight into yesterday morning.

The Medikom hospital was hit by military drones in the Obolonsky district of Kyiv, where 26 patients were evacuated as fire raged through the medical facility. Three more were wounded, including women aged 97 and 77. An investigation into a "war crime" strike on a medical facility has been launched.

Up to eight Russian missiles hit Chernihiv region in a reported attack on a Ukrainian military training facility with missiles launched from strategic bomber aircraft.

The fresh attacks were a slap in the face to the US president who had declared: "I'm not thrilled with Putin. He's killing too many people."

Trump had also accused Putin of lying to him when the Russian ruler claimed that his residence was attacked at Valdai in Novgorod region. A week ago, Trump said that he was "very angry" after Putin had claimed his palace – one of the most intensely guarded sites on Earth – had been targeted by the Ukrainians.

Lying

Now, after analysing intelligence data, Trump said: "I don't believe that strike happened.

"There's something that happened fairly nearby but had nothing to do with this."

Trump told reporters: "He [Putin] said his house was attacked. We don't believe that happened." The president spoke after Putin's military spy chief had handed over a hi-tech "drone controller" supposedly showing it was programmed to hit the Valdai palace.

Trump's dismissal of the claim of an attack on the residence suggests the US have concluded – as Ukraine always claimed – that the Russians were lying over an attack on Putin.

Ukraine struck the Energia defence plant in Yelets, Lipetsk region, which makes chemical-based power sources for Russian weapons including Iskander-M ballistic missiles.

Earlier, some 200 flights were delayed in Moscow due to Ukrainian military drones.

LIFE IN KYIV

JOHN MARONE

Despatch from the front line

WHILE Ukrainian soldiers fight to push the Russian army off their land, a retailer has launched a campaign to erase the Russian language from Ukrainian books.

Silpo, a nationwide chain of Ukrainian supermarkets, has urged customers to donate Russian-language books to be recycled into Ukrainian literature.

"This campaign is a new lease of life for Russian-language books that have been collecting dust," reads a press release by the supermarket chain.

The Russian language had long served as the glue that held together the Russian empire, the Soviet Union and, more recently, Putin's "Russian World".

But since Russia's all-out invasion in February 2022, Ukraine's innumerable bookworms have stubbornly eschewed reading in the enemy's language, now conspicuously absent from the nation's ubiquitous book stores.

Silpo has helped them do so by setting up 46 collection points across the country where books in Russian can be dropped off for recycling. The chain set a goal of collecting 80 tons of books.

Recycling Russian books 'symbolises a transition from the past to the future'

Public participation has been lively, said Alyona at one Silpo store in Kyiv.

She said: "One elderly woman showed up with a trailer full of books. There were so many that we asked her to pull up to our loading ramp to unload them."

A few people asked if they could take the doomed Russian works home to save them from destruction, but staff told them this would defeat the object.

Instead, the books have been sent to one of the grocery chain's warehouses to be sorted and sent on for recycling. The recycled paper is then used to print Ukrainian-language books.

Publisher Ranok says: "Every page printed on paper that used to be part of a Russian language publication symbolises a transition from the past to the future."

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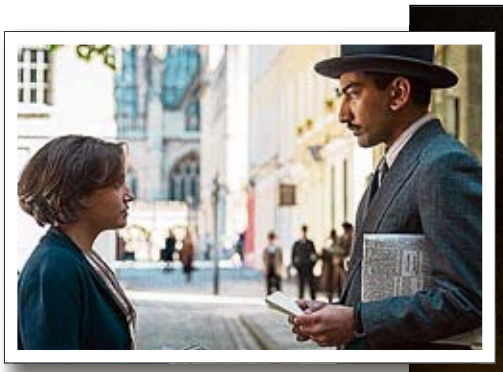

Helena as Lady Caterham. Left, Mia McKenna-Bruce as Lady Eileen 'Bundle' Brent and Nabhaan Rizwan, who portrays Ronnie Devereux

Martin Freeman gets on the case as Supt Battle, top. Mia with Edward Bluemel who plays Jimmy Thesiger, above

Helena Bonham Carter on Broadchurch creator's adaptation

'Chris Chibnall has out Agatha'd Agatha Christie'

BY **MARK JEFFERIES**

THE twists and turns in the TV adaptation of Agatha Christie's Seven Dials are more than a match for the Queen of Crime, says Helena Bonham Carter.

Firstly, Helena plays Lady Caterham, with her character having been changed from Lord Caterham in the original 1929 novel.

But the star also says show writer Chris Chibnall, the creator of ITV drama Broadchurch, has devised other ingenious shocks for viewers.

Helena says: "The huge psychological complexities attracted me to the job. On top of that, it's Agatha Christie...What Chris Chibnall has done with this adaptation is that he's almost 'out Agatha'd' Agatha.

"There were changes to the book with permission from the Christie estate, but it retains the mood and has some ingenious twists."

In the Netflix series, a practical joke goes horribly wrong at a country house party set in 1925 England, where the most unlikely people unravel a mysterious plot.

Mia McKenna-Bruce stars as Lady Caterham's daughter Lady Eileen "Bundle" Brent, who probes the murder plot as an amateur sleuth.

Fragile

Martin Freeman's Supt Battle also tackles the case, while Nabhaan Rizwan plays Ronnie Devereux and Edward Bluemel is the charming Jimmy Thesiger. Explaining more about her character, Helena, 59, says: "Lady Caterham is governed by the loss of her husband and son, she's psychologically very fragile.

"She's forced into the situation of responsibility and has to act as man of the house. Bundle is all she has, and while Bundle is her daughter she can also act like a parent.

"Yes, it's set in the Roaring Twenties and there was celebration and women's liberation happening but Lady Caterham is stuck in time, in 1915, when she lost her son.

"It's almost Miss Havisham-esque, the clocks stop and so does Lady Caterham. In the 1920s there was a shadow of what happened in World War One over everyone, there were few young men left and this affects how Lady Caterham shows up."

Ex-Doctor Who showrunner Chibnall, 55, *below*, has been an Agatha Christie fan since a child. He says he wanted the three-part series to be "funny, have wit and the energy of the bright, young characters" and an ending you may not predict.

Helena says: "I didn't see it coming. With the twists and turns in Christie's books, you can never see it coming. But it makes total sense when you find out. "We've seen so many Christie adaptations but they always keep me guessing."

Speaking to Radio Times about one of Christie's other great characters, she adds: "I've always wanted to play Marple, who's a great heroine. The first film I remember was Death on the Nile, which was beautiful and full of famous people, and felt very exotic.

"But Christie was prolific – the best-selling author of all time – and wrote so many lesser-known books. I find her fascinating – why would somebody write so much about how to kill?

"She was a nurse in the war and learnt all about poison, which is a feminine way."

Freeman, best known for his roles in The Office, Sherlock and The Hobbit trilogy, said he relished the chance to work with a glittering cast, including Fight Club and Sweeney Todd star Helena.

He added: "I got to work with people who I don't know, who I want to know. I also got to work with people whom I've been watching for many, many years, whom I've never worked with before.

"And Helena Bonham Carter certainly falls into that category. I've been aware of her since I was a teenager, and she's brilliant."

● *Agatha Christie's Seven Dials airs on Netflix on Thursday,*

Picture: ADAM GERRARD

I WAS TOLD MY CAREER WOULDN'T LAST!

But It Ain't Half Hot Mum star Melvyn Hayes, who releases his autobiography this month, is still filming comedies aged 90. He looks back at working with David Croft and Cliff Richard

EXCLUSIVE
By **Peter Dyke**

HIS career spans 75 years and includes appearances in films such The Young Ones, Summer Holiday and The Curse of Frankenstein… and Benidorm, EastEnders and SuperTed on television. But It Ain't Half Hot Mum star Melvyn Hayes was once told by an actor early on in his career that he wouldn't be on screen for long.

"Over the years there have been some bad people I've encountered," recalls Melvyn, 90. "I won't name names but I did a TV play and at the end of it, I finished my scene and the whole crew clapped and the whole cast did too.

"And then this one actor came up to me and whispered, 'Enjoy it… it won't last'. Well, that was 60 years ago and I am pleased to say it did last!"

Indeed, Melvyn has been so busy he's only now got round to publishing his autobiography, fittingly called It Ain't Half Late Mum.

So what's taken him so long? With a smile, Melvyn admits it was a chore having to submit the chapters to editors but also lawyers who swooped in to remove certain stories.

"It all had to be passed by a legal team and I am afraid they'd call me and say, 'Take that out'," he chuckles. "I had a story for the book about an actress but she is still alive. My legal team said, 'Take that out!'"

Melvyn was born in Wandsworth in South London in 1935 and his first brush with showbiz came in 1950 when he was just 15 years old.

He got a job as an assistant to a conjurer who performed the Indian rope trick for the crowds.

After a few stints in the theatre, he landed film roles in The Curse of Frankenstein and Bottoms Up in the 1950s.

But in 1961 a bigger opportunity knocked when he got a part in Cliff Richard's movie The Young Ones.

It was such a success that he also appeared in the singer's sequels Summer Holiday and Crooks In Cloisters and then went on to star in Carry On England and the film versions of Love Thy Neighbour and Man About The House.

"People ask, 'What was Cliff really like?', I'd like to say he was terrible but the truth is he wasn't," says Melvyn. "When we filmed Summer Holiday in Greece, and I had to drive that bus well, I had lessons before we shot it. Then all I could think was, 'Cliff is on board with Una Stubbs and The Shadows and the insurance is going to be enormous if I go over the cliff'. And the headline will be 'Cliff goes over the cliff'."

In Summer Holiday, right, with Sir Cliff Richard, centre

IT WAS his role in It Ain't Half Hot Mum – about a concert party entertaining the troops in Burma during the Second World War – which made Melvyn a household name.

He is best known for playing the flamboyant Gunner "Gloria" Beaumont in the BBC comedy penned by David Croft and Jimmy Perry which launched in 1974.

"Viewers thought we flew to India to film it," he laughs.

"We actually did it in Farnborough. It should have got an award for the set.

"I mean it looked like it was blazing hot. But the only make-up we were allowed to have was to have a spray of water and glycerine before every scene on our backs and under our arms to make us look all sweaty. It made so many of us household names. And, bless him, Don Estelle who played Lofty would spend most of the opening before the curtain went up for the show running around saying, 'I've had a letter from the income tax man again. All he wants is my money'.

"We all had a great time. I tried to inject some of my own lines into the show but what would happen was I'd say to David Croft, 'Can I try something?' and he'd say, 'Show me' followed by, 'That's very funny. Save it for panto'."

However, the comedy which featured the words "pooftahs" and "coolies" and a cast that included actor Michael Bates wearing dark make-up to play Indian bearer Rangi Ram was very much of its time and has not been repeated on mainstream telly since.

Melvyn says: "It's a shame I know but I understand. I mean my mum used to love The Black and White Minstrel Show but it was different times." Unlike some stars of a certain age, Melvyn admits he is lucky that his phone is still ringing.

There were plans to bring back the popular cartoon series SuperTed.

It originally ran from 1982 until 1986 and Melvyn was all set to reprise his role – voicing the effeminate character of Skeleton.

But he reveals that in the current snowflake climate changes had to be made. "We were told they were going to reboot SuperTed but it hasn't happened," he says.

"They said it wasn't going to be like before. I was told, 'You can't play Skeleton

Melvyn Hayes relaxes at home with his pet dogs

It Ain't Half Hot Mum with Windsor Davies and Don Estelle

On EastEnders with the late June Brown

like you played him before with that lisp'. "And they said we can't have a character called Bulk because he is a fat man.

"It's sad but so many things in our business never happen."

In recent years, he has landed slots on the sitcom Not Going Out with Lee Mack as well as booking a guest seat on the game show Would I Lie To You?

He's just filmed a comedy pilot called Doubles about two carers who are meant to be looking after an OAP stuck at home.

"But they go to the wrong house!" he adds with a laugh. Melvyn has no truck for today's flood of reality stars who seem to be in every celebrity game show, TV contest and even panto.

He says: "Back in the day we had 'real stars'. Now we have celebrities and you don't know these people.

"When you see those celebrity lists on these shows, I think, 'I don't know them'. Suddenly they become stars and they are on every other show.

"In my day I'd do The Palladium panto for 15 weeks with the likes of Windsor Davies. Now you go and do some shows in Brighton or Bournemouth or Belfast and you find you are the only one playing the theatre with a name. You have got people like the local DJ or the local radio man or someone on a reality show."

As gangster Mr Pink in Benidorm

The actor, who has been married three times, has six children and is a grandfather and great grandfather. He was with his third wife Jayne for 30 years before she died in 2022. The pair were also foster parents to more than 50 children.

ASKED if he had had any "hot" secret liaisons with any stars, he laughs: "No I don't think so… because I didn't!"

And having reached 90, his biggest fear is loneliness rather than the Grim Reaper.

"I'm not spiritual or anything," he adds. "When you get older the people closest to you are suddenly gone. It's just sad when people are left on their own."

The one person he would have loved to see enjoy all of his incredible career is his dear old mum Sarah whom he nicknamed Queenie as that was her "stage name" when she performed in clubs as a singer.

"She would have loved seeing me in Benidorm as Mr Pink but I had to swear and she would have hated that," Melvyn adds. "I said the F-word. It is not a word I ever use. I'd never use it on stage like some comedians these days. They think you have to swear to get a laugh.

"She would have loved the book's title too.

"It Ain't Half Late Mum… because I really should have done it sooner."

● *It Ain't Half Late Mum by Melvyn Hayes (Alliance Publishing Press, £20) is published on January 22, pre-order now from Amazon and Waterstones*

Picture: LEON NEAL/GETTY

Duke denies three counts of strangling his estranged wife

Duke of Marlborough at court in High Wycombe yesterday

BY **EMILY FERGUSON** Royal Editor

THE Duke of Marlborough has denied strangling his estranged wife on three occasions.

Charles James Spencer-Churchill, a relative of Sir Winston Churchill and Princess Diana, is accused of three charges of intentional strangulation against Edla Marlborough between November 2022 and April 2024.

High Wycombe magistrates court heard that the 70-year-old is accused of striking her several times following an argument in the garden of their home before putting his hands around her neck on November 13, 2022.

Assaulting

The court was told that on April 23, 2023, the duke allegedly grabbed his wife's hair before hitting her with a closed fist and then grabbing her by the neck.

The aristocrat is also accused of pushing her on the bed and putting his hands tightly around her neck on January 29, 2024.

Appearing in the dock yesterday, the duke – who gave his address as Blenheim Palace – indicated that he would plead not guilty to all three counts of intentional strangulation.

He was released on bail to appear at Oxford crown court on February 5, where he will be asked to formally enter pleas to the charges.

The twice-married aristocrat inherited his dukedom in 2014.

Spencer-Churchill is a first cousin, three times removed, of wartime PM Sir Winston and a distant relative of the late Princess Diana through the Spencer family.

He married his second wife, Welsh ceramicist Edla Griffiths, in 2002 and they separated in 2024.

They are said to have met while she was living in Chelsea and working on her art, and they married after dating for seven years.

The duke's ancestral family home in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, is owned and managed by Blenheim Palace Heritage Foundation.

In a statement, the group said: "The foundation is unable to comment on the charges, which relate to the duke's personal conduct and private life, and which are subject to live, criminal proceedings.

"The foundation is not owned or managed by the Duke of Marlborough, but by independent entities run by boards of trustees."

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Trustpilot

Cash still vital as £76bn withdrawn from ATMs

BY **VICKY SHAW**

CASH remains "important to many people", with £76billion withdrawn from ATMs last year, according to cash machine network Link.

Figures from the firm show £76.7bn was taken from Link ATMs in 2025, with 1.27 billion transactions recorded across the year – a slight decline on 2024.

The average withdrawal in 2025 was just over £90, and the busiest day was on December 19, when £355m was taken out of machines.

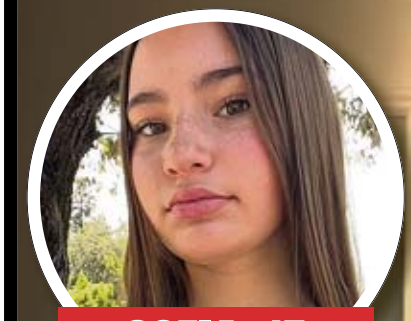
Link covers 77% of the UK's ATM transactions. The company's director of strategy, Graham Mott, said that despite the "overall downward trend" in cash withdrawals annually, "cash remains important to many people and £76bn was still withdrawn from Link ATMs last year".

He added: "People may be visiting cash machines less often and some are relying exclusively on a digital wallet on their phone, but cash continues to be a vital budgeting tool for many. It remains an essential and resilient payment choice for millions."

RICCARDO, 16
Italian, from Rome

Floral tributes are laid at the scene for the victims of the disaster

CHARLOTTE, 15
French, British and Israeli nationality



SOFIA, 15
Swiss, from Castel San Pietro

TRISTAN, 17
From Switzerland

GIOVANNI, 15
Italian, from Bologna

ALICE, 15
Greek-Swiss nationality

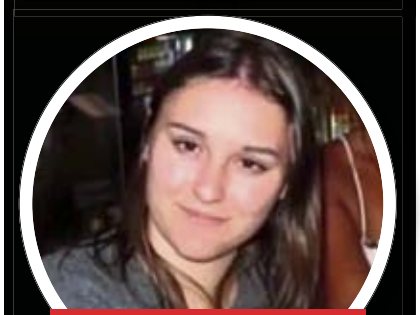
CHIARA, 16
Italian, from Milan

MATEO, 23
Music producer was DJing in bar

ACHILLE, 16
Italian, also from Milan

EMANUELE, 17
Italian, from Genoa but lived in Dubai

ARTHUR, 16
From Switzerland



EMILIE, 22
From France

Young victims of Swiss fire

THESE are some of the 40 people killed in the Swiss ski resort fire disaster, including British schoolgirl Charlotte Niddam.

Charlotte, 15, was one of 20 teenagers who died when flames engulfed Le Constellation bar in Crans-Montana on New Year's Day. The youngster, who had triple French, Israeli and British nationality, was a former pupil of Immanuel College, a private Jewish school in Hertfordshire, and the Jewish Free School in North London.

Her funeral is likely to be held in Paris on Thursday.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper yesterday sent her condolences, saying: "My thoughts are with all her family and friends after this devastating loss." Earlier

BY **PATRICK HILL**
in Crans-Montana, Switzerland

Charlotte's family said: "It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our beautiful daughter and sister Charlotte.

"Thank you for all your support those last few days."

On Sunday, mourners left flowers at the scene and Swiss police confirmed the identities of all the dead. Among them were Swiss-born sisters, Diana and Alicia Gonset, aged 14 and 15, as well as Alice Kallergis, 15.

The death toll included Italians Sofia Prosperi, 15, Giovanni Tamburi, 15, Chiara Costanzo, 16, Achille Barosi, 16, Riccardo Minghetti, 16, and Emanuele Galeppini, 17. Others who died included Tristan Pidoux, 17, keen boxer Benjamin Johnson, 18, who reportedly died saving his friend's life, and Émilie Pralong, 22, Arthur Brodard, 16, and Matéo Lesguer, 23, who was DJ at the bar.

Fire chief David Vocat said: "When I saw those people screaming, people al-most on the ground, burned, it was truly something very shocking. A friend of mine said to me: 'I didn't sign up for this.' Nobody signed up for this."

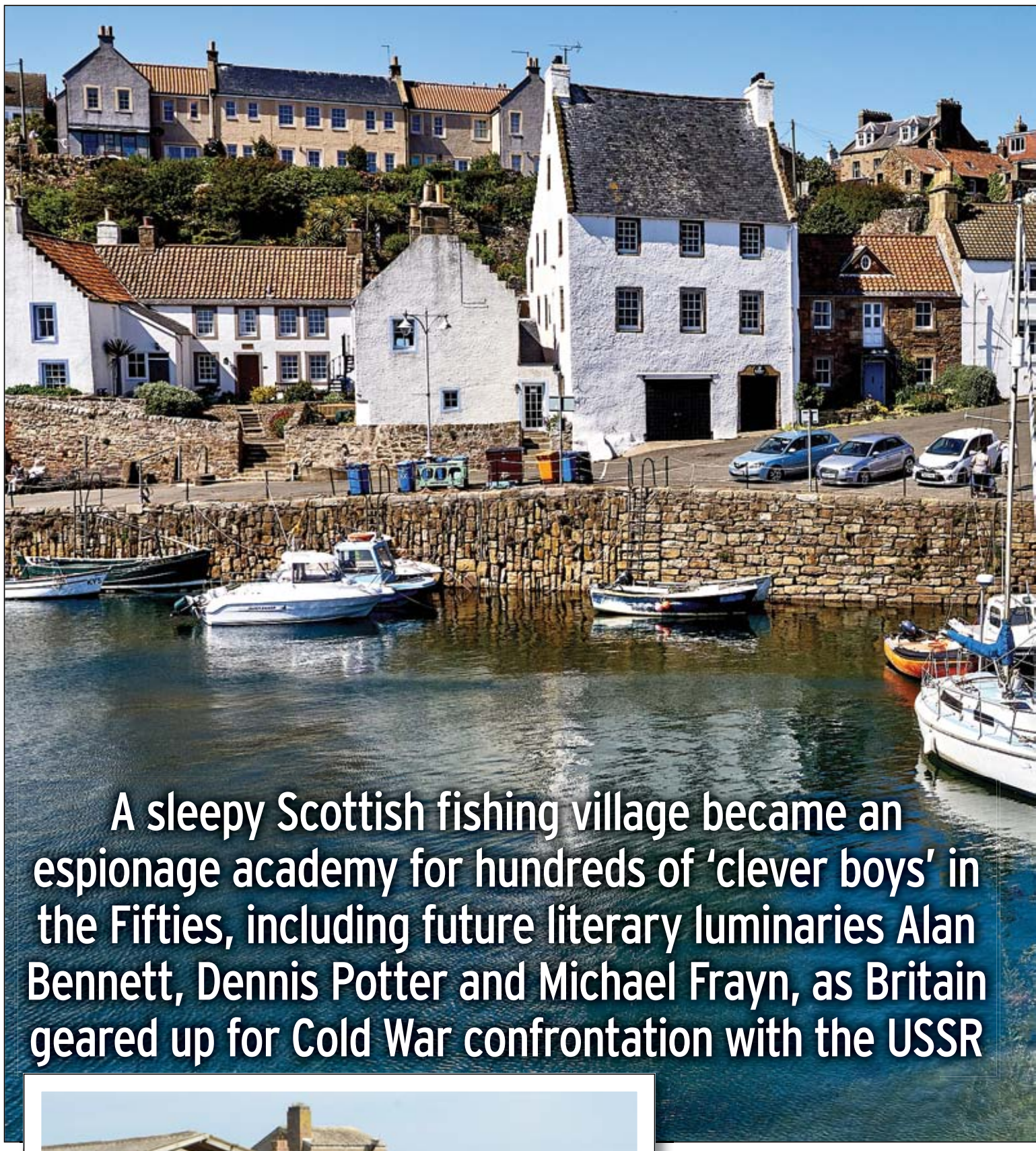
Some 119 were also injured in the fire which began at 1.30am.

Yvette Cooper sent her condolences to family

EXCLUSIVE

By **Maggie Ritchie**

SCHOOL



A sleepy Scottish fishing village became an espionage academy for hundreds of 'clever boys' in the Fifties, including future literary luminaries Alan Bennett, Dennis Potter and Michael Frayn, as Britain geared up for Cold War confrontation with the USSR

WITH its charming miniature harbour and cottages, the sleepy picturesque fishing village of Crail on the Scottish coast in Fife is a draw for tourists. But in the 1950s, its cobbled streets were filled with off-duty servicemen known by locals as "the linguists".

As members of the School for Spies, a military base located close to Crail, they were some of the hundreds of Cold War personnel covertly taught Russian so they could become secret agents and interpreters to listen in to the "Red Menace" as fears of a Third World War intensified.

Today, the base is a ruin with abandoned barracks. But in 1956, the RNAS Crail (HMS Jackdaw) airfield in Fife established the Joint Services School for Linguistics so that teachers could train some of Britain's finest young minds.

The JSSL was based in Fife because the former naval air station was available for re-use. Prior to this, the language school was split across three separate locations – Bodmin (Army), Caterham (Navy), and Cambridge (RAF). These operations were merged at Crail in 1956.

The school was a response to intelligence needs during the Cold War as the threat of all-out nuclear war intensified after the Soviet Union held its first bomb test in Kazakhstan in 1949, to the surprise of US intelligence services, and after it successfully launched the first satellite Sputnik in 1957.

The Soviets kept a close eye on the JSSL but there is no evidence they penetrated the school. However, the Russian spy Geoffrey Prime, convicted in 1980 for leaking information to the Soviets while working for the RAF, was one of the 6,000 alumni who went through the various JSSLs.

Among the national servicemen dispatched to Crail to do their bit in the Cold War were three clever grammar school boys who would go on to become playwrights and novelists – Alan Bennett, Dennis Potter and Michael Frayn.

Bennett went on to write about spies. An Englishman Abroad is based on a meeting between actress Coral Browne and Guy Burgess, a member of the Cambridge spy ring, who spied for the Soviet Union while an officer at MI6. And A Question of Attribution is set in 1956, when Sir Anthony Blunt – pillar of the establishment and respected knight of the realm – is working as surveyor of the Queen's Pictures.

The writers were among the 700 or so young men at Crail who were immersed in Russian culture and equipped with the language skills to interrogate Russian spies.

Other famous graduates were former Royal National Theatre director and founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company Sir Peter Hall, and former Bank of England governor "Steady" Eddie George.

Young men deemed to have an aptitude for languages were selected from schools and universities all over Britain – reminiscent of the "tap on the shoulder" MI6 recruitment technique where a potential candidate is approached as a student by a talent scout.

School site on an old military base is derelict

MANY graduates would go on to become Cold War translators or interpreters, listening out for important communications from the Eastern Bloc and carrying out other vital tasks in the interests of national security.

The JSSL conscripts spent up to two years immersed in Russian language and literature. The regime was mentally arduous with students memorising long lists of technical Russian vocabulary and given weekly exams.

If they didn't keep their pass marks up, they faced being reassigned to less desirable roles. They were put through their paces by eccentric White Russian émigrés and Soviet defectors who found employment at the JSSL – nicknamed Heartbreak House by the pupils.

Among them were some odd and colourful figures, including a self-styled "colonel of cavalry" with a wooden prosthetic who claimed to have lost his leg while fighting against the Bolshevik Reds in the Russian civil war.

Another, a mysterious countess, was always dressed from head to toe in black because she was in mourning for the Tsar and his family. Documentary maker Leslie Woodhead, whose memoir My Life as a Spy featured his days at the Crail JSSL, wrote about some of the more eccentric teachers he encountered.

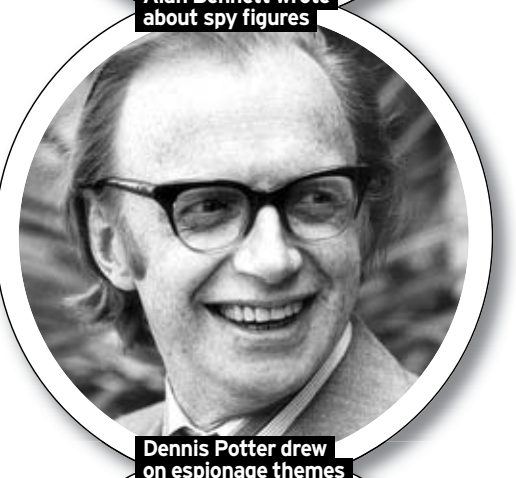
He recalled: "We were coached intensively by an exotic bunch of teachers including Mr Makaroff from the monastery, Prince Volkonsky with his gold-tipped cane and Colonel Godlevski, who had drunk champagne from the slippers of ballerinas. To this day I can remember the Russian for 'my undercarriage is down and locked'."

Students were housed in disused buildings constructed between the two world wars. For recreation, they put on plays in Russian in a makeshift theatre in the gym and even had a jazz band called the Siberian Salt Sifters. The

OF SPIES

Fun in Crail was said by students to be 'limited'

Alan Bennett wrote about spy figures



Dennis Potter drew on espionage themes

Establishment traitor Sir Anthony Blunt

JSSL magazine Samovar, written half in English and half in Russian, with Frayn as one of its editors, helped keep them amused.

There were also Chopin recitals, a bridge club and an orchestra known for its spirited renditions of Russian and Eastern European folk songs.

FUN in Crail was "thin on the ground" with "limited opportunities for a big night out", according to Woodhead, only enlivened by trips to the local cinema and the Music Box Cafe with its fancy new jukebox playing Elvis Presley's Hound Dog and Heartbreak Hotel.

Geoffrey Elliott and Harold Shukman recalled in their JSSL memoir, Secret Classrooms: "St Andrews at least had more for the serious drinker, particularly in Kate's Bar, which, unusually for those days, offered 100% proof Polish vodka, slivovitz (a brandy) and the lethal Polish honey liqueur krupnik."

The spy school closed in 1960 after the end of conscription but a small museum remains which runs a video about the JSSL, Lessons From Heartbreak Hotel, while older locals still remember when the "clever boys" came to town. But the school's legacy is long-reaching – a generation of Russian speakers who had immense respect for Russian culture and literature with former students going on to have distinguished careers as professors of Russian at Oxford and Cambridge.

Despite becoming a footnote in British espionage history, many of its alumni went on to define postwar British culture.

The distinguished writer, poet and translator DM Thomas argued that as well as the school's aim of producing linguists for a military purpose, it also "created a generation of young and influential Britons who had generous, respectful and affectionate feelings for Russia, the eternal Russia of Tolstoy, Pushkin and Pasternak".

The school for spies is the setting for my novel White Raven, a spy thriller that sees a woman artist enter an intense relationship with an intelligence officer from the Crail JSSL. She becomes embroiled in a dangerous game of cat and mouse at a time when Scotland was at the forefront of the Cold War. I was fascinated by Scotland's role in defending the West from the "Russian Bear".

Scotland had huge strategic importance during the Cold War.

Its geographic position between the US and the USSR, with direct access to the Atlantic meant it played – and continues to play – a vital role for Nato defences.

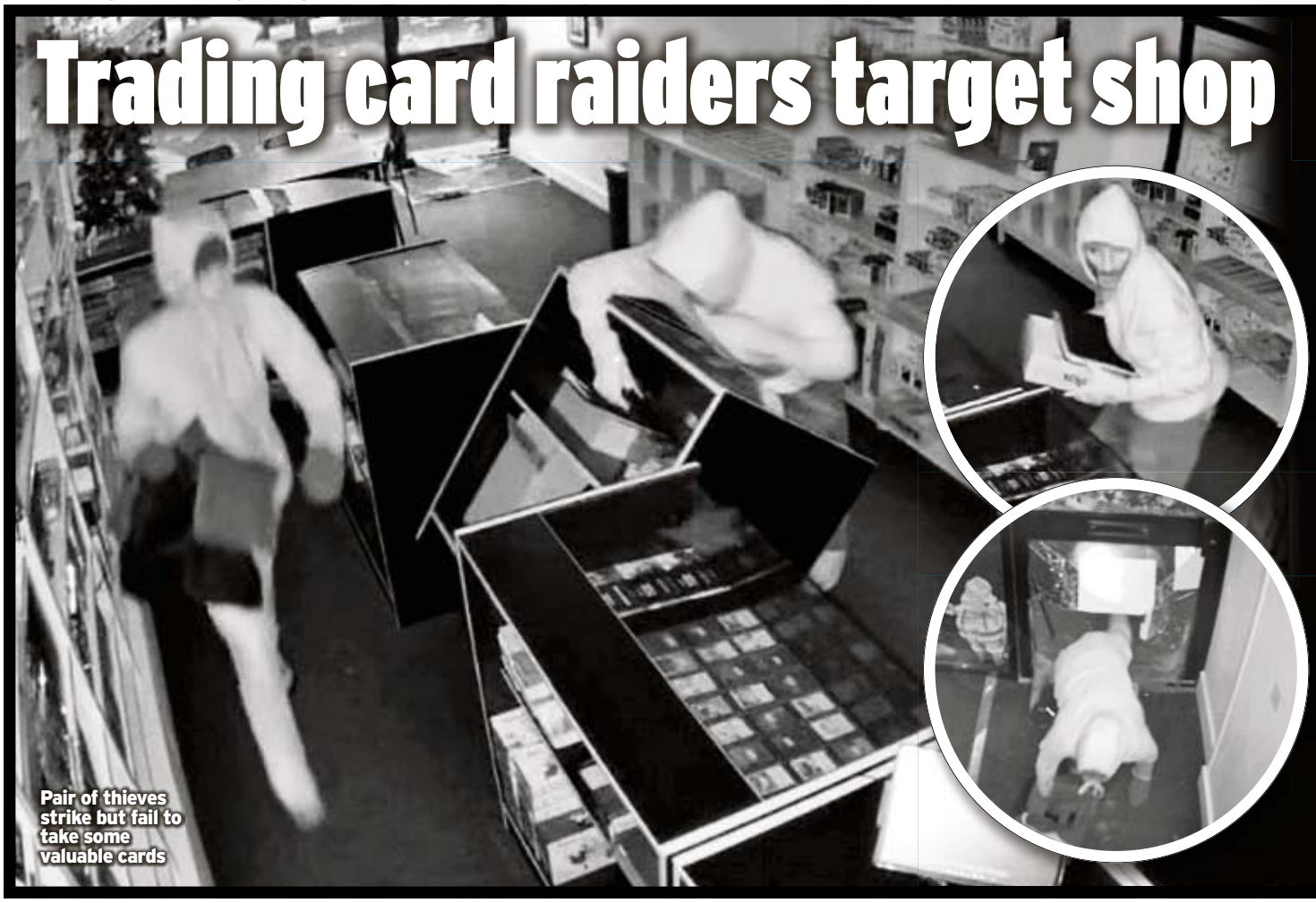
ITS weapons bases, secret nuclear bunker for the heads of government in case London was destroyed by the bomb, and spy centres, are evidence of the struggle between East and West. Sitting bang in the middle of Iceland, Greenland and Britain, it became the ideal site for a ballistic missile submarine base to fend off Soviet stealth attacks through the north-west passage.

The heroine in my novel becomes caught up in the race between the Russians and the US to build nuclear-powered subs that could fire missiles at each other's shores without having to resurface to refuel.

She soon discovers that the world of spies is full of treachery, manipulation and deceit and that what started out as a thrilling game has deadly consequences.

● *White Raven by Maggie Ritchie (Scotland Street Press, £16.99) is out now.*

Trading card raiders target shop



Pair of thieves strike but fail to take some valuable cards

BY **JAKE MEEUS-JONES**

THIS is the moment thieves raid a trading card store and nab £10,000 worth of stock, but miss many other valuable cards including one Pokémon worth £1,200.

Jakes Breaks owner Chris Wilmott, 44, said he was "shocked" when he learned that two robbers had smashed their way into the store, in Beeston, Nottingham, at 6am on New Year's Day.

The raiders emptied the contents of several cases into backpacks but as they fled, they dropped many of the cards, most of which were damaged by water.

Chris with his son Jake

Chris said among their haul were £300 Pokémon cards, £1,000 NBA card boxes and full binders of Magic: The Gathering cards. He added: "We're estimating the loss to be between £5,000 and £10,000. I was shocked and disgusted."

Chris, who runs the business with his son Jake, said the crooks failed to spot the £1,200 card along with many others. Store security is now being beefed up and Nottinghamshire Police are investigating.

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Fake admiral fined for wearing uniform

BY **ELEANOR BARLOW**

AN ex-history teacher who dressed as an admiral at a Remembrance event has been fined £500.

Imposter Jonathan Carley, 65, joined dignitaries laying wreaths and saluting at the ceremony in Llandudno last November.

But service personnel and veterans had become suspicious of his rare Distinguished Service Order medal and the ceremonial sword he carried at previous events he attended in the area since 2018.

When he was arrested five days after last year's Remembrance Sunday event he told police: "I've been expecting you", Llandudno magistrates heard yesterday.

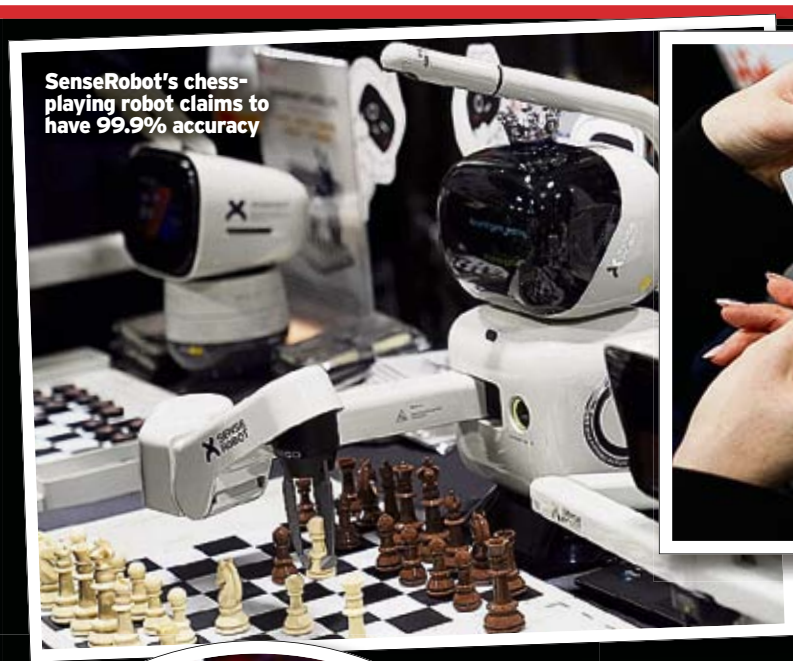
Cadets

Carley, from Harlech, Gwynedd, told police the uniform was issued to him when he was in the cadets but he had rear admiral rings added by a tailor and bought medals online.

Yesterday he admitted wearing uniform without permission. District Judge Gwyn Jones fined Carley £500 and ordered him to pay £85 towards prosecution costs and a £200 surcharge.

He told him: "It's a sad reflection upon you that you chose to do such a thing on a very difficult day for so many."

Carley wearing uniform at a previous event in 2019; left, leaving court yesterday



SenseRobot's chess-playing robot claims to have 99.9% accuracy

A model of the Allergen Alert mini lab for the portable testing of food allergens including gluten and milk

The Y-Brush, an electric toothbrush that detects signs of 300 illnesses

The Samsung AI Beauty Mirror is demonstrated for choosing sunscreen and makeup

Clever dog! Tech to teach us new tricks

THE future is here and the future is a robodog that treats loneliness, gadgets that do all the housework and a foldable phone that doubles as a pocket TV.

These were among the latest contraptions and inventions unveiled at the Consumer Technology Association annual show in Las Vegas.

Some of the know-how is at concept stage, but other devices are ready to go.

AI was a prominent feature, included in a chess robot, a mirror that recommends beauty products for your skin and complexion, and Omnia's body scanner

BY **GRAHAM HISCOTT**

that inspects your heart, weight and metabolic health.

It is also in the Y-Brush, an electric toothbrush that can detect signs of 300 diseases, and in the Nosh robot cooker – you put ingredients into different slots and the machine will produce a meal.

For more help in the home there is a chef's knife that vibrates at 30,000 times a second to aid cutting, while LG's CLOiD robot can apparently fold laundry, serve food – and even unload the dishwasher.

Luka AI cube, above, is kids' pocket toy. Below, Autonomous dog robot Jennie can move its head to look at you and wag its tail. Maker Tombot says it can help treat anxiety and depression

Samsung Galaxy Z TriFold smartphone is dubbed a tablet in your pocket

Seattle Ultrasonics chef's knife featuring ultrasonic technology for easily cutting food, top. Cearvol Lyra hearing aid and glasses, above

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By **Hannah Britt**

A LONG-NEGLECTED sea-front pub with peeling bright blue paint caught the eye of five swimmers as they bobbed about in the chilly waves.

One of the year-round sea dippers joked they should buy it. Months later they took the plunge and did just that.

In July, the women pooled their savings to buy The Forester for £470,000 at auction, saving the 19th century pub in Deal, Kent, from demolition or redevelopment.

Now Jane, Becky, Pascale, Megan and Gemma, known as the Forester Five, are being applauded by locals for saving what they call "the only real pub in Deal".

None of the Forester Five had even pulled a pint let alone run a pub but drinkers are flocking to the place. Sadly, the Five are bucking a national trend, with one pub a day shutting in England and Wales last year due to cost pressures.

UK landlords protested about Chancellor Rachel Reeves' business rate changes in her November Budget. But the PM's spokesman said she had delivered a £4.3billion support package for pubs, restaurants, and cafes as hospitality is a "vital part of our economy".

Mum-of-three Gemma Jackson, 45, who works in financial services tech, is alarmed at the rate of pub closures.

"They're bought and turned into houses by property developers, it's sad. We couldn't bear for the same thing to happen to The Forester. It's in such a good location on the sea-front, it's got 'luxury flats' written all over it.

"The Great British pub in many ways is like a church…just with more drinks on offer.

"It's a place anyone and everyone can go, alone or with friends – a home from home. They're the beating heart of the community.

"To lose them would be a travesty. I don't think people realise how crucial a pub is to some people. Some of our regulars are older and they may have lost partners. They come in and they have a good chat. It's important to them."

The Forester Five outside the newly painted pub

DRESSMAKER and mum-of-two Megan Smith, 45, says: "Hatching the plan to buy the pub was so exciting. We kept it a secret – we didn't tell a soul – only the five of us knew. The whole auction experience was exhilarating and we emerged the other side as five incredibly proud landladies."

Pascale Colony, 53, who works in fashion, says: "For some, it's nearly like an extension of their lounge. They know each other, they see each other every day."

Jane Kesley, 61, a media director, says: "A lady who makes sausage rolls every week brings them in for the other customers."

Entrepreneur Becky Artmonsky, 55, says: "It's a bit like the Cheers song that says 'you wanna go where everybody knows your name' – that is the heart of a pub, and I do think there is something quite special about ours. You will never go in and not find someone to chat to. It's really lovely."

It has been a baptism of fire for the Forester Five who took over in August.

Gemma says: "The first pint I pulled was in the Forester. I've been getting tips from the regulars. I've loved learning about all the elements: the temperature, the glass,

Left to right, Gemma Jackson, Jane Kesley, Becky Artmonsky, Megan Smith and Pascale Colony

'We couldn't face losing our boozer...so we all bought it'

How five swimmers took the plunge to save their local pub by snapping it up for £470k

the way you pour it." None of the women have given up their full-time day jobs and are proud to say they have kept on all six pub staff.

Breathing new life into the tired building, they have replaced windows, turned the peeling paint a beautiful shade of green, and updated the wine list. They've also put on lots of events to lure new customers in and make money for more planned renovations.

Becky says: "We have music, quiz nights, bingo, comedy and a games night. New Year's Eve was our biggest night so far – the place was packed."

The in-house team is all women. But this is nothing new for the pub. The Forester has a long tradition of women at the helm.

A new plaque at its entrance says: "Charlotte Ralph 1886-91, Susan Faucheux 1891-98, Mary Annie Redsull 1938-44, Isabella Bolt 1959-63, Margaret Moran 1978-2021." Megan says: "Women have always been at the heart of The Forester. And we were keen quickly to ensure they felt comfortable and welcome inside, too. Pubs can be seen as a male place, and we wanted to make sure it was an environment for everyone.

'It's a place anyone can go, alone or with friends – a home from home... the beating heart of the community'

"We have walkers, dog walkers, gardening groups, a photography group, darts."

Dip & Sip, offering morning coffee and pastries to Deal sea swimming groups on the first Sunday of every month, became so popular they can barely fit the numbers in.

Gemma says: "The first Sunday we did it was a really rainy November day – freezing and miserable. I felt quite disheartened as I looked out of the window, I thought 'surely nobody is going to turn up'. But as I left my house and looked down the road, 70 people were taking their clothes off ready to take the plunge. I felt so emotional."

"We had 70 very wet dry robes in the pub that day, thankfully we have a roaring fire.

"It was amazing to look about – everyone chatting, friendships solidifying and forming, that's what it's all about.

"It's the same for the five of us. We knew each other before. Now we're the very best of friends."

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge. For the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task.

For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found in the puzzles pullout

YOUR ANSWERS

Beginner	77	-38	÷3	REVERSE THE DIGITS	x3	-57	6/9 OF THIS	+57	÷3	
Intermediate	2	CUBE IT	x17	-15	5/11 OF THIS	+149	÷12	+167	÷4	
Advanced	171	+54	TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT	INCREASE BY 60%	x7	+158	-42	3/4 OF THIS	-94	

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 3
LOTTERY 6 20 34 38 47 48 4
THUNDERBALL 2 3 9 13 38 9

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2
EUROMILLIONS
8 27 42 44 46 1 10
THUNDERBALL
4 12 18 19 32 9

THE HEALTH LOTTERY

MONDAY, JANUARY 5
4 13 27 32 45 42

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4
6 18 25 28 35 34

The Health Lottery has raised more than £135m for health-related causes since 2011. Details at thehealthlotteryfoundation.org.uk

PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Saturday:
Is social care crisis being given enough priority by Sir Keir Starmer?

YES: 7%
NO: 93%

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1			9		4			3
	2	3		7			9	
7				3				5
	5		1		7	4		
6		9	4	5				2
	8			9			2	
3			5		6			8
	6	2			3	5	1	

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MORE PUZZLES – PULLOUT
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

8	3	2	4	9	6	1	7	5
1	6	7	3	5	8	2	9	4
5	9	4	1	2	7	8	6	3
6	8	5	2	1	4	7	3	9
7	1	3	8	6	9	5	4	2
4	2	9	7	3	5	6	1	8
9	5	1	6	4	2	3	8	7
2	7	6	9	8	3	4	5	1
3	4	8	5	7	1	9	2	6

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Stranger Things stamp range from Royal Mail is sure to be a hit with fans of the series

Glow-in-the-dark stamps celebrate Stranger Things

BY **FRANCES MILLAR**

FANS of Stranger Things can now buy a "glow-in-the-dark" stamp collection celebrating the Netflix phenomenon.

The set of 14 stamps was created with British artist Kyle Lambert, the illustrator behind the show's posters.

His artwork has appeared across billboards, merchandise, comic books and worldwide advertising campaigns for the hit show.

Adding an extra twist, if you shine a UV light over the stamps then logos from the series are revealed.

Set in the 1980s, Stranger Things follows the residents of the fictional town of Hawkins, Indiana, whose lives are disrupted by a monstrous alternate dimension known as the Upside Down. Since its debut on Netflix in July 2016, the spooky series has attracted record viewing figures and built a vast global fanbase.

Royal Mail's David Gold said the collection captures "the essence of the series – from its unforgettable characters to the eerie imagery that has gripped audiences worldwide".

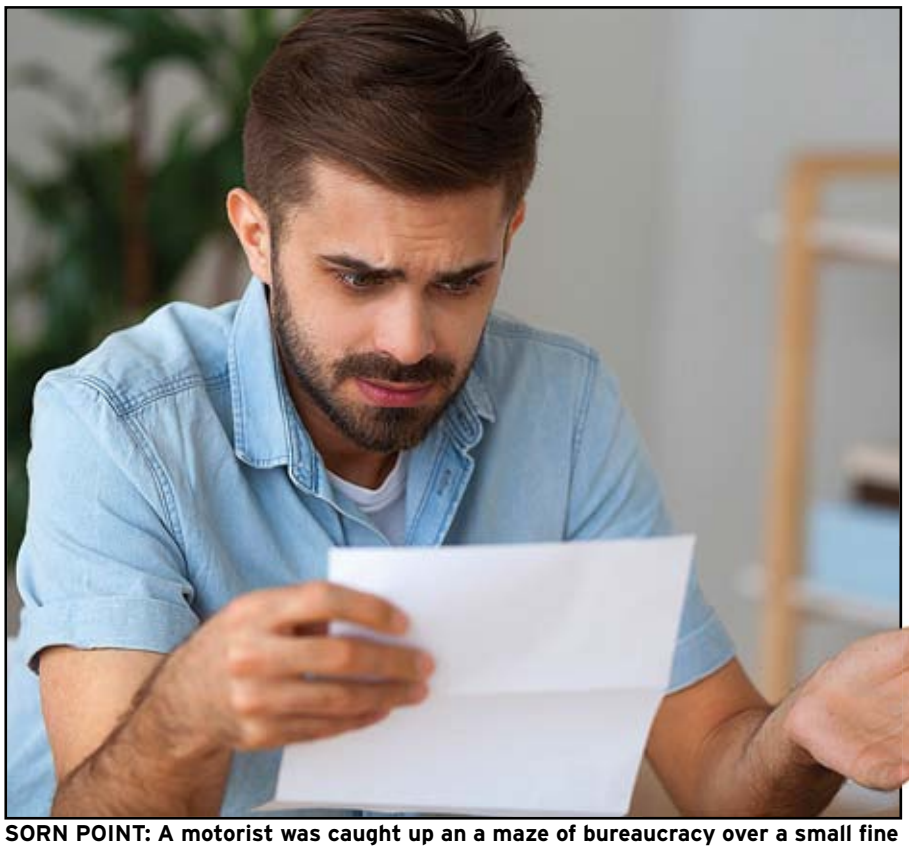
The stamps and collectable products are available to pre-order from today with general sale next Tuesday.

A presentation pack featuring all 14 stamps is priced at £24.70.

The Crusader Fighting for your rights

By MAISHA FROST

Driver's exasperating off-road to hell



SORN POINT: A motorist was caught up an a maze of bureaucracy over a small fine

DOING the right thing was all a car owner ever intended when taking action in an emergency, but it landed him on the wrong side of the law and then mired him in convoluted delays and consequences.

Jack Morton's wretched experience began two years ago when his untaxed vehicle, correctly stored on his driveway with a SORN (Statutory Off-Road Notification), had to be moved urgently on to the public pavement just outside his home.

This was because of a leak that posed a fire risk to electric cables – the repair took a couple of days. Jack's mistake, due to the pressures, was to leave the car untaxed and potentially uninsured during that time.

A month later he received a fine from the authority in charge – the DVLA. The law does allow for mitigating circumstances and Jack appealed using a DVLA envelope with the details, but heard nothing.

"I received a court summons and a fine so took the offer to explain my reasons again," Jack, an NHS surgeon, told Crusader. Things looked up for a while, with the DVLA confirming first they had not received the letter, but then they had and "being very reassuring and saying they would try to reopen the case with my paying £33.34 arrears which I agreed to", he added.

Ten months went by before Jack says he learned reopening the matter had not been possible. "I am so confused now," he declared. While the sum involved is small, Jack remained deeply dissatisfied with the process, timings and the ruling so far.

A fine only for a SORN offence is spent after a year, but Jack wants to have a clean record if possible and remains concerned about any professional impact, especially involving his humanitarian medical work overseas.

There is now a new magistrates court hearing date set for this month.

When contacted for comment, the DVLA said: "The law is clear that all vehicles being used or kept on a public road must be taxed. Motorists who do not tax their vehicle can face financial penalties, court action and the risk of having their vehicles clamped or impounded."

● *Name has been changed*

SORNs and mitigating circumstances are an integral part of road safety and fairness in a system that the public contributes to. In the case here, whatever the outcome, the timeline appears inexplicably long. Sending an appeal by recorded delivery is not a requirement, "but it might have ensured mine did not disappear in the system. That's where everything came unstuck," says Jack. Many official things are taking longer these days so keep records, think what delays could mean and how to avoid them, then chase.

If you want help with a problem or wish to applaud good service, we will do our best to help. We can't always promise a reply but please contact The Crusader, Daily Express, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP. Email: crusader@express.co.uk. Only send document copies, not originals. ALWAYS INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER, thank you.

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Sex, Drugs and Walking Sticks

by Dr Miriam Stoppard

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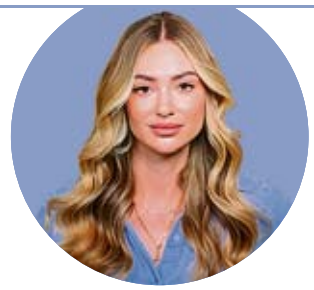


SHOPPING YOUR NEXT BUY

Edited by **ZOE CRIPPS**

ALDI LACURA ULTIMATE SKINCARE

Hitting Aldi's middle aisles is the Lacura Ultimate skincare collection, featuring an eye cream, serum and two moisturisers, with prices starting from just £6.99. Aldi claims this range is "inspired by" Augustinus Bader, a skincare brand renowned for its celebrity following with fans including Victoria Beckham, Hailey Bieber and Margot Robbie – and hefty prices. Available in stores now, these Specialbuy skincare bargains won't be around for long.

NEAL'S YARD REMEDIES OAT & CERAMIDE BARRIER REPAIR CREAM, £38

TRIED & TESTED REVIEW

Fashion and beauty lead Zoe says: "Winter weather and strong central heating wreak havoc on my eczema-prone skin every year, but this soothing face cream has been making my January feel a lot more comfortable.

"With a blend of natural ceramides derived from olives, certified organic oat extract and magnesium, it instantly takes away that dry, tight feeling and leaves my skin looking plump and healthy."

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK

Compiled by **GRACE SALMON**

Contrast Pocket Borg Jacket £40 **VERY**

Bond Builder, £44.50 **MARIA NILA**

Sky-Fi 6 Pan Eyeshadow Palette, £16 **MORPHE AT LOOKFANTASTIC**

Stripy Vase with Wavy Handles, £10 **HABITAT**

SoundLink Flex Portable Speaker 2nd Gen, £149.95 **BOSE**

Sports Wrap Top, £22.99 **H&M**

Flared Sports Leggings, £27.99 **H&M**

Frizz Ease All-in-1 Extra Strength Serum, £8.95 **JOHN FRIEDA AT BOOTS**

Swirl Storage Pot, £9.50 **OLIVER BONAS**

Grey Self. Nylon Sling Bag £22, **NEXT**

TREND REPORT

The 70s have been influencing fashion trends for a while now, so it was inevitable that it would start to infiltrate our homes, too. The most effective way to incorporate it? Update a smaller accent piece, such as a side table.

TOP TABLE

Nest HKLiving Currents Side Table in Ceramic, £159

With a 70s feel, unique shapes and rich colours (like sand and pink), these tables are great statement pieces for adding natural warmth or modern flair to living rooms.

GO RETRO

Asda George Home Green Flower Table, £28

Supermarket brands are leading the way with chic homeware, and this fun table from George Home, available in pink or green colourways, adds instant retro flair to a living room or bedroom.

TOP 5

THE BEST DEALS FOR A DRY JANUARY

If you're giving up booze after overindulging, these non-alcoholic drinks will make the month fly by...

WILD LIFE BOTANICALS SPARKLING NUDE NV BRONZE, *£16*
Packed with notes of stone fruits and florals, pour this guilt-free wine into a champagne flute to cheat a real celebration drink.

LYRE'S DRY LONDON SPIRIT, *£23.99*
Inspired by the classic Dry London Gin, with juniper and bright citrus notes. Best enjoyed as a sparkling G&T.

EVERLEAF DRINKS FOREST NON-ALCOHOLIC APERITIF GOLD, *£22*
A bittersweet aperitif that can be mixed with tonic or turned into an Orange Blossom Spritz with some non-alcoholic prosecco and mint leaves.

ALMAVE AMBAR, *£27*
From Lewis Hamilton's own alcohol-free tequila brand, this is perfect for sipping on the rocks or in a cocktail, featuring flavours of blue agave, caramel and toasted wood.

ALDI ZEROZECCO, *£2.99*
Winner at the People's Choice Drink Awards, it delivers well-balanced acidity and complexity with citrusy flavours.

PAMPERED PETS

Our vet **DAVID GRANT** *works his magic*

Cool for a second cat?

Q We have a two-year-old female tortoiseshell cat and we thought it would be nice for her to have a companion, especially as she is left on her own for a few hours during the day. We are thinking of getting her a companion in the new year, and not sure of how best to go about this to avoid conflict. Any advice would be appreciated.

A In the long-term, companionship could hopefully be beneficial for both cats. Introducing a new cat to a resident cat can be very challenging, however, and the process is best done gradually as problems will arise if introductions are rushed.

It's also a good idea to wait until the new year, when all the festive excitement will have died down.

Some problems that often occur include aggression, such as hissing, growling and fighting. Both cats may exhibit stress by hiding, inappropriate toileting, or over-grooming.

'Take things slowly at first'

If cats don't grow to like each other after the initial period a limited truce may result, with long term stress a distinct possibility.

To minimise problems, take things slowly at first. The new cat could stay in a separate part of the house for a week, without being seen. Scent is important and this can be used to effect by swapping their respective scents with a cloth, or their bedding, and synthetic feline pheromones are useful.

Let them see each other gradually, under supervision, but keep both cats physically separate.

Make face to face sessions brief at first, gradually increasing their duration.

For further detailed information search "International Cat Care – introducing cats".

Q Why are dogs not vaccinated against rabies in this country? Could a dog, imported from a country where rabies is prominent spread the disease here?

A The UK is in the fortunate position to be free of rabies. The last case of a rabies infected dog acquiring the disease from within our country was in 1922. It is therefore not considered necessary to vaccinate potentially vulnerable dogs where the disease does not exist.

A similar virus is extremely rare in some bat species without constituting a risk to dogs. Government strategy is based on preventing the disease entering the country. Until 2000 this was mainly achieved by six months quarantine in kennels.

Quarantine was replaced in 2000 with a pet travel scheme relying on stringent identification with microchips, vaccination against rabies and from some countries blood tests for rabies antibodies with a waiting period. This scheme and various modifications have kept us rabies free.

However, puppy smuggling has recently emerged as a potential risk for rabies to slip into the country. Pups have been found that were too young to have been vaccinated, in some cases with forged documents, often in poor health, and from countries where rabies virus is present.

To counter these risks, the Animal Welfare Act (2025) import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets has just become law. Introduced by vet Dr Danny Chambers MP, it aims to stamp out the cruel trade of puppy smuggling by raising the minimum age to six months, along with other welfare measures. For details search "PDSA Animal Welfare Act 2025 explained".

David Grant has been a vet for more than 50 years. Email questions to him at pamperedpets@reachplc.com. He cannot enter into individual correspondence.

BEE DOG JACKET
£12.99, Homesense

DUCK DOG TOY
£15, Sophie Allport

WILD IN THE COUNTRY

This new year, why not embark on some new adventures in the countryside? These cosy country-chic pieces are a must-have for getting out and about this January

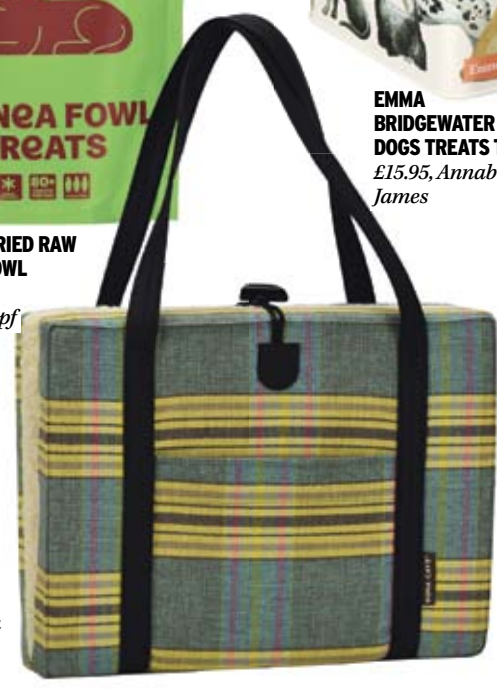
Compiled by – **FAITH RICHARDSON**

RUFUS & ROSIE SLEEVELESS BEIGE DOG JUMPER
£5, Jollyes

HARRIS TWEED SIGHTHOUND COLLAR BY HOLLY&LIL
£81, Charley Chau

EMMA BRIDGEWATER DOGS TREATS TIN
£15.95, Annabel James

FREEZE-DRIED RAW GUINEA FOWL TREATS
£6, Scrumpf



FOLDED TRAVEL DOG BED
£136, Kona

TRAVEL PET BOWL
£3.99, Homesense

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Oxford, Horspath Industrial Estate OX4 2TZ
Romford, Gallows Corner RM3 0BX

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Leicester, St Georges Way LE1 1SH
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Hull, Anlaby Trade Park HU10 6RJ
Leeds, Spence Lane LS12 1EF
Newcastle, Blaydon Trade Park NE21 5TR
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York, Unit 5, Marrtree Business Park YO30 4AB Now Open

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Eastbourne, Hillier Garden Cntr BN24 5BS
Southampton, Romsey Road SO16 9GJ

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Bristol, Taurus Road, Patchway BS34 6FB
Cheltenham, Kingsditch Rtl Park GL51 9LX
Exeter, Bridford Rd EX2 8QX
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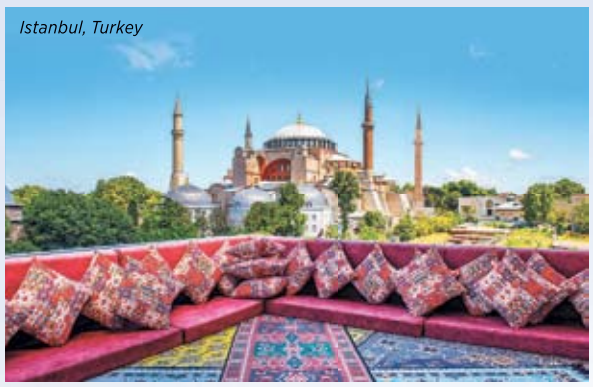
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TODAY'S TV ONES TO WATCH

by **MIKE WARD** *TV critic*

Pick of the day
MILLIONAIRE HOT SEAT, ITV1, 7.30PM

WHAT NOT TO EAT, C4, 8PM
HAVING spent weeks encouraging us to stuff our festive faces, what TV likes to do each January is nag us about our diets.

This new show, hosted by Prof. Tim Spector and Dr Kandi Ejiofor, even does that really annoying stunt where it combines all the bad stuff a family has eaten over a given period and displays it as off-puttingly and guilt-inducingly as it can.

In this case, a bath is filled with noodles, to shame self-confessed addicts Vicki and Rob. The thing is, even quality food can be made to look awful this way.

A week's worth of one's favourite caviar looks vile when one eats it from the bidet.

DOGS BEHAVING (VERY) BADLY, C5, 8PM
OUR trainer chum Graeme "The Dogfather" Hall has brought in a few new features for his latest series.

These will include a regular puppy school item, where he'll aim to instil good habits into dogs before the bad ones get a chance to set in (long-term, he needs to be careful, mind you, not to do himself out of a job).

The elementary training is essentially about helping your puppy to master the basics – namely, sit, stay, down, recall and walking nicely on the lead.

Obviously if you plan to enter them for Britain's Got Talent, you'll also want to ensure their unicycle riding is up to standard.

DRIVING SEAT
Thanks a million Jeremy Clarkson

A GET RICH WAY QUICKER FORMAT

ONE thing that drives me nuts as a viewer (there are actually quite a lot of things, how long have you got..?) is when quiz show contestants insist on talking us through their thought processes.

I'm talking about people on shows such as Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?, from which this new thing is a spin-off, where they're given as long as they wish to answer each question, and seem to bask in such a luxury.

For example, if Jeremy asks them the capital of Spain, and they're given the options of Madrid, Paris, Berlin or Margate, they won't just go: "Madrid, final answer, obviously, durr. Next question?"

No, they'll want us to hear how they've got to that answer, laboriously explaining their process of elimination. They'll remark that Paris has some nice cafés, that Margate is where they once built a good sandcastle, and that the answer to Jeremy's question, which is all we really want to hear, can't possibly be Berlin because everyone knows that's the capital of Slough.

The joy of Millionaire Hot Seat is we're spared all that waffle. There's a clock ticking for every question, so you either have to answer it quite quickly or pass. If you pass (which you can do only once), you have to vacate the seat, for now at least, and let the next person have a go. If you answer and you get it wrong, you're not only out of the game for good, you're also to blame for the maximum available prize money dropping, so everyone else will hate you.

Oh, and I almost forgot: there are no lifelines. So you can't ask the audience, you can't ask the host, you can't go 50-50 and you can't phone a friend.

One thing that drives me nuts as a viewer is when contestants on the regular show, having taken that fourth option, waste the first of their 30 precious allotted seconds by greeting that friend with: "Hello". What on earth are they thinking? Don't say: "Hello". Don't say: "Did you have a nice Christmas?" Don't ask: "How's the wife and kids?" Just ask your friend the question, you twit. Quickly!

As you can imagine, I'm a joy to watch TV with.

BEST FOOD
RICK STEIN'S AUSTRALIA, BBC2, 7PM
In this new six-part series, the chef returns Down Under to embark on a deeply personal and revelatory road trip through the country.

BEST DOC
INSIDE THE FACTORY, BBC1, 8PM
Paddy McGuinness kicks-off a new series by taking a deep dive into the manufacturing of the famous Jammy Dodger biscuit.

BEST MYSTERY
THE GOOD SHIP MURDER, 5, 9PM
When a famous director's muse is murdered during the premiere in Cannes, it's down to Jack and Kate to solve the case.

BEST DRAMA
WATERLOO ROAD, BBC1, 9PM
Deputy head Darius Donovan is holding the keys to the kingdom, but chaos is unleashed when he welcomes back excluded pupils.

TODAY'S PREVIEWS ARE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE

FILM RATINGS

★★★★★ BRILLIANT
★★★★ VERY GOOD
★★★ GOOD
★★ AVERAGE
★ BAD

(R) REPEAT

ALL PROGRAMMES ARE LISTED IN GREENWICH MEAN TIME (GMT).

BBC One

6.00am Breakfast News headlines.
9.30 Morning Live Magazine.
10.45 Rip Off Britain: Scams
11.30 Homes Under the Hammer The progress of properties in Lancashire and Kent. (R)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt Antique hunting in Newark. (R)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Lost and Found in the Lakes Lost treasures are reunited with previous owners.
2.30 Animal Park The team get ready for the hippos returning.
3.00 I Escaped to the Country A Doncaster duo now thriving in the Welsh Valleys.
3.45 Garden Rescue A retired rocker in Swindon seeks a low-maintenance space with nature at its heart. (R)
4.30 The Travelling Auctioneers A pair of siblings hope they can turn heirlooms into a dream holiday.
5.15 Pointless Alexander Armstrong and Judi Love host the low-scoring quiz show.
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 Regional News; Weather

BBC Two

6.00am Lost and Found in the Lakes With Helen Skelton. (R)
6.30 The Travelling Auctioneers Featuring James Broad and Robin Johnson. (R)
7.15 Bargain Hunt (R)
8.00 Sign Zone: Antiques Roadshow: Unseen Treasures With Fiona Bruce.
9.00 BBC News Headlines.
12.15pm Politics Live Stories from Westminster and beyond.
1.00 Impossible Quiz show. (R)
1.45 Brainbox Challenge (R)
2.15 The Manor Reborn (R)
3.15 Hidden Treasures of the National Trust The homes of writers Rudyard Kipling and Vita Sackville-West. (R)
4.15 Madagascar (R)
5.15 Flog It! From Ickworth House near Bury St Edmunds. (R)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games With Huge Davies, Amy Dowden, Humphrey Ker and Jamie-Lee O'Donnell.
6.30 Robson Green's Weekend Escapes JJ Chalmers joins Robson in and around the Scottish town of Pitlochry.

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain A lively mix of news, current affairs and lifestyle features.
9.30 Lorraine Entertainment and the latest fashion news.
10.00 This Morning Topical daily magazine, featuring a mix of celebrity chat, showbusiness news, advice and discussion. Including Local Weather.
12.30pm Loose Women Celebrity interviews and topical debate.
1.30 ITV News; Weather
1.55 Regional News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal From the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds.
3.00 Time Is Money Sara Davies hosts the quick-fire quiz where contestants are given their prize money upfront.
3.59 Regional Weather
4.00 Deal or No Deal Gameshow, hosted by Stephen Mulhern.
5.00 The Chase Colin, Hunter, James and Louise take on one of the experts.
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV Evening News The day's headlines; Weather

Channel 4

6.25am Cheers Triple bill. (R)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond Triple bill of the show. (R)
9.10 Frasier Four episodes. (R)
11.10 American Pickers The collectors go hog wild at a sprawling ranch in Texas. (R)
12.05pm Channel 4 News
12.10 Car S.O.S An Austin Healey is fixed up in Co Durham. (R)
1.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It In Wiltshire, Henry Cole and Gemma Longworth restore a vintage car. (R)
2.10 Countdown With Debbie McGee in Dictionary Corner.
3.00 A Place in the Sun Jasmine Harman searches for a holiday home in Torremolinos. (R)
4.00 A New Life in the Sun Emily and Dave prepare their French pub for its grand opening.
5.00 Junior Bake Off The youngsters bake a giant cookie for dessert biscuit day.
6.00 A Place in the Sun Ben Hillman is in Turkey to help a father and daughter with their search for a family holiday home in the town of Side.

5

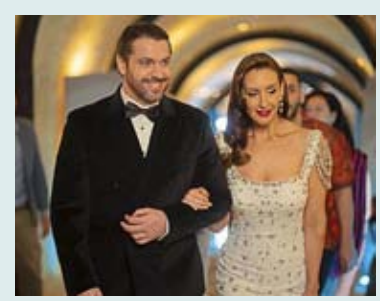
6.00am Milkshake! Children's TV.
9.15 Jeremy Vine Discussion.
11.30 Storm & Alexis Discussion and debate, with Storm Huntley and Alexis Conran.
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright Debate on the day's biggest stories, and consumer advice to help viewers save money.
2.00 Vanessa Discussion show.
3.00 The Madame Blanc Mysteries An elderly woman believes a precious treasure holds the key to finding her brother. (R)
4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun Benidorm's Chunkz swaps tribute act performances for barbeque catering, hoping to inspire his kids with new tasty recipes.
5.00 5 News at 5 Headlines.
6.00 Secrets of the Royal Palaces A look at stories of palace scandal, including Diana, Princess of Wales confessing all to one of her closest members of staff (R); 5 News Update

9pm, WATERLOO ROAD: Jon Richardson

9pm, QI: Holly Walsh

8pm, EMMERDALE: Chas Dingle

9pm, CATCHING A KILLER: DCI Louise Metcalfe



9pm, THE GOOD SHIP…: Shayne Ward and Catherine Tyldesley

7

7.00 The One Show Angellica Bell and Lauren Laverne present a mix of nationwide reports and live studio-based chat.
7.30 EastEnders Nicola has a plan for revenge and Alfie tries to handle a difficult situation. Phil makes a big decision.

7.00 NEW Rick Stein's Australia New series. Rick Stein embarks on a deeply personal and revelatory road trip through Australia. He starts his journey by exploring Sydney, the city where he first arrived as a 19-year-old in the 1960s.

7.30 NEW Millionaire Hot Seat Jeremy Clarkson hosts a quiz in which six hopefuls compete for £1,000,000, with only one player at a time able to take a place in the Hot Seat and answer questions to work the way up the Money Ladder.

7.00 Channel 4 News A round-up of all the latest headlines, in-depth interviews and analysis of political developments and current affairs. Plus, the day's leading sports stories and up-to-the-minute weather reports.

7.00 The Coastal Map of Britain Documentary examining the rise and fall of the UK's greatest ports. The programme spans the first international traders arriving on the coasts of Devon and Cornwall (R); 5 News Update

8

8.00 Inside the Factory Paddy McGuinness visits the south Wales factory where Jammie Dodgers are made, following the process from dough to packing. Meanwhile, Cherry Healey finds out which biscuit is best for dunking in tea.

8.00 A House Through Time: Two Cities at War David Olusoga traces the lives of residents of two apartment blocks – one in London and one in Berlin – during the Second World War to reveal the citizens' life at the time. (R)

8.00 Emmerdale There is complete carnage after the previous night's events.
8.30 Coronation Street Weatherfield mourns the loss of one of its own as others try to get to the truth of exactly what happened.

8.00 NEW What Not to Eat New series. Professor Tim Spector and GP Dr Kandi Ejiofor help viewers to navigate the world of ultra-processed foods. They start with milkshakes, and explain what ultra-processed foods do to the body.

8.00 NEW Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly Graeme Hall throws the doors open to his puppy school on the outskirts of the Cotswolds. A loving home is possessed by an unruly spirit, whose behaviour is tearing a family apart.

9

9.00 NEW Waterloo Road The classroom drama returns for a fresh term. New deputy head Darius welcomes excluded students to the school and is put to the test by a violent arrival. Jon Richardson and Lindsey Coulson star.

9.00 QI XL In this extended edition of the comedy panel game, Sandi Toksvig asks questions on animals that start with a W, with Nabil Abdulrashid, Holly Walsh and Sam Campbell joining regular panellist Alan Davies.

9.00 NEW The Martin Lewis Money Show: Live The cash expert rings in the new year with a bill-busting special, presenting all the latest financial news and offering tips to keep on top of family finances in January.

9.00 Catching a Killer The murder of Cumali Turhan, who was lured into a Chelmsford bar by a love rival in November 2024, where he was killed by a single knife stab to the neck, before his mutilated body was thrown out with the rubbish.

9.00 The Good Ship Murder As the ship docks in Cannes, infamous film director Werner Altmann's 'muse', rising star Mimi McQuinn, is murdered during the premiere of his latest film. Setting Jack and Kate are on the case.

10

10.00 BBC News at Ten
10.30 Regional News; Weather
10.40 Waterloo Road Portia is humiliated when her new romance turns sour, while Ben finds himself being schooled by a supply teacher after landing himself in hot water.

9.45 Live at the Apollo Dara O Briain introduces comedians Jack Skipper and Felicity Ward to London's Hammersmith Apollo stage, where they perform their stand-up sets.
10.30 Newsnight Analysis of the day's events; Weather

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather
10.30 Regional News; Weather
10.45 Tracking a Serial Killer: True Crime Presents A dangerous killer is on the loose and detectives need to act fast when the bodies of two men are found stabbed to death in neighbouring flats in Derby. (R)
11.45 Millionaire Hot Seat Jeremy Clarkson hosts a quiz in which six hopefuls compete for £1,000,000, with each question being against the clock and there is no room for indecision. (R)

10.15 Social Media Monsters Serious crimes where social media played a significant role. The story of a break-up that went wrong, prompting one of the ex-partners to tell his friends online that he 'can't let it slide' – leading to an attack.

10.00 FILM Air Force One (1997, 15) The American president is forced to take drastic measures to save his family when their plane is hijacked by Russian terrorists demanding the release of a jailed radical general. Meanwhile, the vice president tries to manage the crisis from Washington and has to decide whether to shoot the aircraft down. Action thriller, starring Harrison Ford, Gary Oldman, Glenn Close, Dean Stockwell and William H Macy. ★★★★

11

11.40 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special Tensions are high as Agnes and the gang prepare for an incoming storm. Buster nervously awaits his birthday parachute jump, while a lost nun is in need of help. Starring Brendan O'Carroll. (R)

11.00 FILM Priscilla (2023, 15) Schoolgirl Priscilla Beaulieu is slowly drawn into a strange and unhealthy co-dependent life with Elvis Presley. Cailee Spaeny stars in Sofia Coppola's biopic, based on the autobiography by Priscilla Presley, with Jacob Elordi as the singer. ★★★★

11.15 Celebrity SAS: Who Dares Wins Double bill. Fourteen British and Australian celebrities – including Dani Dyer, Ryan Moloney and Ben Cohen – face the most punishing challenge of their lives. (R)

12 MIDNIGHT

12.10am Shedites. One-off comedy set in and around the sheds in an Irish village, where men find friendship and purpose while building and repairing things. Starring Phil Davis and Brendan O'Carroll. (R) **12.40** The Weakest Link: Party Special (R) **1.25** Weather for the Week Ahead **1.30-6.00am** BBC News

12.50am Sign Zone: The Traitors. Claudia Winkleman presents the game of backstabbing and trust. (R) **2.00** Sign Zone: Titanic Sinks Tonight. There is a scramble for places in the remaining lifeboats. (R) **3.00-6.00am** This Is BBC Two

12.10am Shop on TV **3.00** Riches. Claudia furiously works to regain Flair and Glory for her family. Meanwhile, as Nina acquaints herself with the business, a social media complaint against the company spirals. (R) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00am** Deal or No Deal. Gameshow. (R)

1.10am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Luigi's in Orange County, California. (R) **2.00 FILM** The Darkest Minds (2018, 12) Thriller, starring Amandla Stenberg. ★★★ **3.45** Jamie's £1 Wonders (R) **4.40** Sunday Brunch (R) **4.55** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It (R) **5.45-6.25am** Countdown (R)

12.25am 9/11: Mystery of the Fifth Plane (R) **1.15** Live Casino Show **3.15** Your Dream Kitchen for Less (R) **4.00** World's Most Scenic River Journeys (R) **4.45** The Wonderful World of Chocolate (R) **5.30** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (R) **5.45-6.00am** Milo (R)

ITV2 FREEVIEW 6

6.00am CITV **7.30** Celebrity Dinner Date **8.30** Olivia and Alex: Parenthood **9.25** The Only Way Is Essex **10.25** The Real Housewives of Miami **11.20** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **12.15pm** Dinner Date **1.15** Celebrity Dinner Date **2.15** The Only Way Is Essex **3.10** The Real Housewives of Orange County **4.10** The Real Housewives of Miami **5.00** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills

6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase With Kelvin Fletcher, Chris Ramsey and Heather Small.

7.00 Deal or No Deal Gameshow.

8.00 The Real Housewives of Orange County Reality show. New housewife Katie fuels a fire between Jenn and Gina.

9.00 TikTok: Murder Gone Viral A look at the case of 17-year-old Charlie Cosser.

10.00 Family Guy Triple bill.

11.30 American Dad! Double bill.

12.25am Bob's Burgers **1.25** Olivia Attwood's Bad Boyfriends **2.25** Unwind with ITV **3.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

ITVQuiz FREEVIEW 28

9.00am Deal or No Deal **10.00** Tipping Point **1.00pm** Lingo **2.00** Tenable **3.00** Beat the Chasers. Bradley Walsh hosts as people face a formidable quiz team. **4.00** Riddiculous. Quiz, hosted by Ranvir Singh. **5.00** Deal or No Deal. Gameshow.

6.00 Lingo Triple bill. Adil Ray hosts the game in which three pairs of contestants use their skills to find words from the fewest letters possible.

9.00 Alan Carr's Epic Gameshow The comedian hosts an updated version of much-loved darts quiz Bullseye, with four pairs of contestants taking on the questions and the dartboard for chance to win big prizes.

10.00 Tipping Point Triple bill. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz show in which four players take on an extraordinary machine in the hope of winning the £10,000 jackpot.

12.50am Tenable **1.50** Unwind with ITV **2.00-9.00am** Teleshopping

BBC3 FREEVIEW 23

7.00pm The Catch Up Today's news.

7.05 SpongeBob SquarePants

7.30 Top Gear Botswana Special Jeremy, James and Richard face a challenge in Botswana.

8.30 Top Gear: Polar Challenge The team competes in a 450-mile race from Canada to the North Pole.

9.30 Movies with Ali Plumb The movies that inspire Tom Cruise.

10.00 *FILM* **Mission: Impossible 2** (2000, 15) A secret agent battles a former spy-turned-criminal mastermind intent on stealing a deadly man-made virus. John Woo's action thriller sequel, starring Tom Cruise and Dougray Scott. ★★★

12.00m't Santa Claus the Serial Killer. Six episodes of the documentary where British journalist Mobeen Azhar travels to Toronto to explore the case of a serial killer. **2.55-3.55am** Top Gear Botswana Special

BBC4 FREEVIEW 9

7.00pm Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise Exploring the wildlife and culture of Central Thailand.

8.00 Yes, Prime Minister MI5 makes an embarrassing announcement.

8.30 Yes, Prime Minister Jim tries to improve employment figures.

9.00 Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies Remembering the double agents who helped to make D-Day such a success.

10.00 Culloden Fact-based drama exploring the realities of battle.

11.10 The Making of Culloden

11.40 Britain's Lost Waterlands: Escape to Swallows and Amazons Country The landscapes that inspired Arthur Ransome's classic.

12.40am Flights of Fancy: Pigeons and the British **1.40** Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies **2.40-3.40am** Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise

GB News FREEVIEW 236

6.00am Breakfast with Eamonn and Ellie **9.30** Britain's Newsroom **12.00noon** Good Afternoon Britain **3.00** Martin Daubney. Updates.

6.00 Dewbs & Co Plain-speaking, straight-talking – Michelle Dewberry delivers her take on the day's news.

7.00 Farage An action-packed hour of topical discussion and debate.

8.00 Jacob Rees-Mogg's State Of The Nation Join Jacob for his unique and unmissable take on the news.

9.00 Patrick Christys Tonight Replay Join Patrick for two hours of spirited debate and news making interviews. Top guests tackle the issues that matter, with a take on every story.

11.00 Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition Tomorrow's news, tonight.

12.00m't The Late Show Live **2.00** Farage Replay **3.00** Patrick Christys Tonight Replay **5.00-6.00am** Patrick Christys Tonight Late Edition

U&Dave FREEVIEW 19

7.10am James May: The Reassembler **8.00** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **10.00** Guy Martin's Lancaster Bomber **11.00** Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey **12.00noon** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **2.00** Robson's Extreme Fishing Challenge **3.00** Top Gear **5.00** Hairy Bikers' Best of British

6.00 Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey

7.00 Would I Lie to You? With Charles Dance, Stephen Mangan, Isy Suttie and Gok Wan on the panel.

7.40 Richard Osman's House of Games Double bill of entertainment.

9.00 Have I Got a Bit More News for You

10.00 QI XL With Ed Byrne, Jimmy Carr, Judi Love and Alan Davies.

11.00 Taskmaster Noel Fielding has a sliding session. Greg Davies watches on.

12.00m't Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? **2.00** Australian Ninja Warrior **3.25** Meet the Richardsons **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

U&Drama FREEVIEW 20

6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** At Home with the Braithwaites **8.15** Doctors **9.30** Classic Holby City **10.35** Classic Casualty **11.40** The Bill **12.50pm** Classic EastEnders **2.05** All Creatures Great and Small **3.10** Howards' Way **4.20** Bergerac **5.20** One Foot in the Grave

6.00 To the Manor Born Audrey and DeVere clash over church.

6.40 Last of the Summer Wine Double bill.

8.00 Harry Wild Harry and Fergus look into the murder of a boxing gym owner.

9.00 Whitstable Pearl A woman hires Pearl to look into a large sum of cash left in her mailbox. Starring Kerry Godliman.

10.00 New Tricks The detectives examine the murder of an East German immigrant.

11.20 Waking the Dead Part two of two. The team discovers a connection between the two cases.

12.40am Hotel Portofino **1.50** One Foot in the Grave **2.20** The Brokenwood Mysteries **4.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

E4 FREEVIEW 13

6.00am Hollyoaks **6.55** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **7.00** Junior Bake Off **8.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.00** The Goldbergs **10.00** The Simpsons **11.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **1.00pm** The Simpsons: four episodes **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.00** Modern Family **5.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

6.00 The Simpsons Double bill.

7.00 Hollyoaks A familiar face returns.

7.30 The Simpsons Mrs Krabappel is fired.

8.00 First Dates Lauren from The Real Housewives of Cheshire is looking to move on after her divorce.

9.00 Gogglebox Double bill. The armchair critics watch Starstruck; an appraisal of Gordon, Gino & Fred: Viva España.

11.05 Open House: The Great Sex Experiment Seeking help in arranging a threesome with another woman.

12.15am Naked Attraction **1.20** First Dates **2.15** Gogglebox **4.05** The Goldbergs **4.50-6.00am** Don't Tell the Bride

More4 FREEVIEW 18

8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It **10.00** A Place in the Sun **11.30** Come Dine with Me **2.10pm** Four in a Bed **4.50** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. A couple choose between properties in Lowestoft and Marbella. **5.55** Car S.O.S. Fuzz and Tim restore an XR2 to show condition.

6.55 Car S.O.S Double bill. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw take on their first ever Honda; Fuzz and Tim get their hands on a Mazda MX5.

9.00 Apollo 1: Destination Moon The story of three astronauts who were selected to fly an Apollo mission. But their prototype Saturn 1B spacecraft was a disaster waiting to happen.

10.35 24 Hours in A&E Double bill. A headteacher arrives having been involved in a collision with a bus; a 64-year-old man is brought to St George's in an induced coma.

12.40am Emergency Helicopter Medics **1.45-3.50am** 24 Hours in A&E

Variations & S4C

WALES As BBC1 except: 1.35-1.45pm BBC Wales Today; Weather **6.30-7.00** BBC Wales Today. The latest headlines; Weather **10.30-10.40pm** BBC Wales Today; Weather

MERIDIAN As ITV1 except: 1.55-2.00pm ITV News Meridian; Weather **6.00-6.30** ITV News Meridian. The latest headlines; Weather **10.30-10.45pm** ITV News Meridian; Weather

CENTRAL As ITV1 except: 1.55-2.00pm ITV News Central; Weather **6.00-6.30** ITV News Central. The latest headlines; Weather **10.30-10.45pm** ITV News Central; Weather

ITV WALES As ITV1 except: 1.55-2.00pm ITV News Cymru Wales; Weather **6.00-6.30** ITV News Cymru Wales; Weather **10.30-10.45pm** ITV News Cymru Wales. Headlines; Weather

WEST As ITV1 except: 1.55-2.00pm ITV News West Country; Weather **6.00-6.30** ITV News West Country; Weather **10.30-10.45pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

ANGLIA As ITV1 except: 1.55-2.00pm ITV News Anglia; Weather **6.00-6.30** ITV News Anglia. The latest headlines; Weather **10.30-10.45pm** ITV News Anglia; Weather

WESTCOUNTRY As ITV1 except: 1.55-2.00pm ITV News West Country; Weather **6.00-6.30** ITV News West Country. The latest headlines; Weather **10.30-10.45pm** ITV News West Country; Weather

S4C 6.00am Cyw **12.00noon** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **12.05pm** Gwladfa: Gwilym Bowen Rhys **12.30** Heno **1.00** Welsh Whisperer – Ni'n Teithio Nawr! **1.30** 3 Lle **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **3.05** Cefn Gwlad **4.00** Awr Fawr **5.00** Stwnsh **6.00** Cysgu O Gwmpas. Beti George and Huw Stephens visit the best holiday lodgings in Wales. **6.30** Sgorio. Action from the JD Cymru Premier. **6.57** Newyddion S4C **7.00** Heno. Nightly magazine programme. **7.30** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. Kelly and Rhys enjoy a bizarre Christmas Day date. **8.25** Rownd a Rownd. Ioan suspects Mair wants to end their relationship. **8.55** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **9.00** Y Cyfweliad. An interview with former international rugby player Mike Phillips. **9.35** *NEW* Cymru ar Gyffuriau **10.00** Clwb Rygbi: Super Rygbi Cymru **10.30-11.35pm** Beicio Mynydd Redbull Hardline

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Sport

SKY SPORTS MAIN EVENT

6.00am LIVE **Tennis** Action from the WTA and ATP Tours, including the United Cup Tennis tournament, WTA Brisbane Open, ATP Brisbane Open, and ATP Hong Kong Open. **1.00pm** Lunchtime Live **2.00** Sports Desk **3.30** LIVE **SA20** MI Cape Town v Joburg Super Kings. Coverage of the match at Newlands Cricket Ground in Cape Town. **7.00** The Transfer Show. The latest headlines. **7.30** LIVE **Premier League** West Ham United v Nottingham Forest (kick-off 8.00pm). **10.30pm-6.00am** LIVE **Tennis** All the latest action from the WTA and ATP Tours.

SKY SPORTS CRICKET

6.00am Big Bash League **7.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **7.10** Big Bash League **8.10** LIVE **Big Bash League** Adelaide Strikers v Sydney Thunder. Coverage of the T20 match. **11.30** Best of England v South Africa **11.45** Best of ICC WT20 **12.00noon** SA20 **2.00** Big Bash League **3.00** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **3.10** Best of Sky Cricket **3.20** LIVE **SA20** MI Cape Town v Joburg Super Kings. From Newlands Cricket Ground. **7.00** Big Bash League **8.00** SA20 **9.00** SA20 **10.00** Big Bash League **11.00** Big Bash League **2.20am** Best of J Anderson: 500th Wicket **2.30** Best of England v South Africa **2.45** Best of ICC WT20 **3.00** Big Bash League **4.00** SA20 **5.00-6.00am** Big Bash League

SKY SPORTS FOOTBALL

6.00am EFL **9.00** EFL Greatest Games **10.00** Championship Retro **12.00noon** EFL **2.00** EFL League One Goals **2.30** EFL League Two Goals **3.00** SPFL Round-Up **3.15** SPFL **4.00** EFL Highlights **5.30** EFL League One Goals **6.00** EFL League Two Goals **6.30** SPFL Highlights **7.00** LIVE **SPFL** Rangers v Aberdeen. **10.30** 1983: When Aberdeen Ruled Europe **11.30** EFL Greatest Games **12.00m't** EFL Cup Retro **2.00** SPFL: Old Firm Derby Best Goals **2.30** SPFL **3.00** EFL Greatest Games **4.00** Championship Season Review **5.00** EFL Cup Highlights **5.30-6.00am** EFL Trophy Football

SKY SPORTS GOLF

6.00am Nick Dougherty's Tee Time Tips **8.00** Junior Golf **8.30** The Open Zone **9.00** Best of the Open Zone 2024 **10.00** The Open – Official Films **12.00noon** Junior Golf **12.30** The Golf Fitness Show **1.00** The Best of The Hero Masterclass **1.30** Best of the Shot Centre **2.00** The Open – Official Films **3.00** The Open Zone **3.30** The Improvers **4.00** Junior Golf **4.30** Mark Roe's Short Game School **5.00** The Open – Official Films **8.00** Junior Golf **8.30** Rory's 2025 **10.00** TGL **12.00m't** The Open – Official Films **4.00** US Open Official Films **5.00-6.00am** The Open – Official Films

TNT SPORTS 1

7.30am Premier League Netbusters **8.00** LIVE **Isuzu UTE A-League** Melbourne City v Brisbane Roar (kick-off 8.00am). **10.00** The Ashes **11.00** Premier League Review **12.00noon** The Gallagher PREM – The Wrap Up **12.15** UIM F1H2O World Championship Highlights **12.45** Ski Jumping World Cup **1.15** LIVE **Ski Jumping World Cup** Coverage of day one of the women's HS98 in the latest meeting of the season from Villach, Austria. **3.00** LIVE **Ski Jumping World Cup** The Four Hills meeting from Bischofshofen, Austria. **5.30** The Ashes. Action from Australia v England. **6.30** Premier League Stories **7.00** Inside Serie A **7.30** LIVE **Serie A** Sassuolo v Juventus (kick-off 7.45pm). All the action from the Italian top-flight match at Mapei Stadium – Città del Tricolore. Sassuolo claimed a shock 4-2 win when the teams last met here two seasons ago. **9.45** UEFA Champions League – Stories of the Finals **10.00** The Ashes. Australia v England **11.00pm-7.30am** LIVE **The Ashes Live** Australia v England. Coverage of day four of the Fifth Test, held at Sydney Cricket Ground.

TNT SPORTS 2

6.00am Serie A **8.00** Fishing: On the Bank **9.00** Test Cricket Highlights **1.00pm** Serie A – Full Impact **1.30** Inside Serie A **2.00** Isuzu UTE A-League Highlights **2.30** The Ashes **3.30** Premier League Netbusters **4.00** Premier League Review **5.00** Isuzu UTE A-League **6.00** LIVE **Freestyle Skiing World Cup** Coverage from Lac Beauport, Canada. **7.30** The Football Archives: UEFA Champions League **8.00** Longines FEI Jumping World Cup **9.00** The Gallagher PREM **10.00** The Gallagher PREM **11.00** The Gallagher PREM **2.00am** The Gallagher PREM – The Wrap Up **2.15** No Filter Rugby **2.30** UFC Reloaded **5.00** MLB Plays of the Week **5.45-6.00am** The Pioneers

BEST OF THE REST – LIVE SPORT

6.00am LIVE **Tennis** All the latest action from the WTA and ATP Tours. (Sky Sports +) **10.30pm** LIVE **Tennis** All the latest action from the WTA and ATP Tours. (Sky Sports +) **1.00am** LIVE **NBA Basketball** Minnesota Timberwolves v Miami Heat (Tip-off 1.00am). Coverage from Target Center. (Sky Sports +) **4.00-6.00am** LIVE **NBA Basketball** Sacramento Kings v Dallas Mavericks. (Sky Sports +)

Entertainment & Factual

ITV3 Freeview 10

6.00am Never the Twain **6.30** On the Buses **7.05** Classic Emmerdale **8.10** Classic Coronation Street **9.10** Inspector Morse **11.15** Heartbeat **1.20pm** Foyle's War **3 .30** Classic Emmerdale **4.35** Classic Coronation Street **5.45** Heartbeat **8.00** Vera **10.00** Foyle's War **11.55** Trial & Retribution **2.05-2.30am** Unwind with ITV

ITV4 Freeview 26

6.00am The Big Match Revisited **8.05** Magnum, PI **9.05** Kojak **10.10** Boon **11.15** The Professionals **12.20pm** Robin of Sherwood **1.35** Magnum, PI **2.35** Kojak **3.45** Boon **4.50** The Professionals **5.50** Minder **7.00** American Pickers **8.00** The Motorbike Show **9.00** Ice Road Truckers **10.00** All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite **12.05am** Dark Side of the Ring **1.00** Auf Wiedersehen, Pet **2.00** Minder **2.50** Unwind with ITV **3.00** Teleshopping **3.30-4.00am** Auto Mundial

5STAR Freeview 32

8.00am Bargain Brits on Benefits **10.00** 22 Kids & Counting **11.00** Traffic Cops **2.00pm** Police Interceptors **5.00** Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up **6.00** Home and Away **7.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors **8.00** Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts **9.00** Fare Dodgers: At War with the Law **10.00** 999: Criminals Caught on Camera **11.00** Skin A&E **12.00m't** 999: Killer on the Line **1.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors **2.00** The Good Wife **3.35-4.00am** Car Pound Cops

REALLY Freeview 17

6.00am Fantasy Homes by the Sea **7.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit **8.00** Escape to the Country **9.00** Salvage Hunters **12.00noon** Antiques Road Trip **2.00** The Repair Shop **3.00** Celebrity Yorkshire Auction House **4.00** Long Lost Family **5.00** A Place in the Sun **6.00** Salvage Hunters **8.00** Antiques Road Trip **9.00** Long Lost Family **10.00** Long Lost Family: What Happened Next **11.00** Help! My House Is Haunted **2.00am** Teleshopping **4.00-6.00am** Salvage Hunters

5ACTION Freeview 33

9.00am Entertainment News on 5 **9.15** Traffic Cops **10.15** Police Interceptors **12.10pm** FILM Run for Cover (1955/U) Western, starring James Cagney. ★★★ **2.10** FILM Fort Utah (1967/U) Western, starring John Ireland. ★★★ **4.00** The Motorway **5.00** Traffic Cops **6.00** Police Interceptors **8.00** Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders **10.00** Police: Suspect No 1 **11.00** Banged Up Abroad **12.00m't** World's Deadliest Weather: Caught on Camera **1.05** Ice Road Truckers **2.05-4.00am** Trucking Hell

SKY ARTS Freeview 36

6.00am Jacqueline du Pre: Genius and Tragedy **7.55** The Joy of Painting **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** The Directors **12.00noon** Discovering: Meg Ryan **1.00** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** Stories from the National Portrait Gallery **3.00** Battle of the Bagpipes **4.00** The Directors **5.00** Discovering: Angela Bassett **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** Leonardo da Vinci: The Universal Man **9.15** Have You Got It Yet? The Story of Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd **11.00** Pink Floyd: The Story of Wish You Were Here **12.20am** FILM Catching Fire: The Story of Anita Pallenberg (2023/15) Documentary about the Italian actress and artist. ★★★★ **2.30** A Play in a Day **3.30** Inside Art: Lubaina Himid at Tate Modern **4.00** Inside Art Special: Coventry City of Culture **5.00-6.00am** The Art of Architecture

Live Premier League
Sky Sports Main Event, 7.30pm
Both West Ham United and Nottingham Forest will be desperate for a win when the sides meet at The London Stadium. Can Jarrod Bowen (left) fire the hosts to three points?

U&GOLD

7.35am Ever Decreasing Circles **8.05** The Green Green Grass **8.40** Dad's Army **9.20** Are You Being Served? **10.00** Open All Hours **10.40** Keeping Up Appearances **11.20** Last of the Summer Wine **12.40pm** The Green Green Grass **1.20** Ever Decreasing Circles **2.00** Dad's Army **2.40** Are You Being Served? **3.20** Open All Hours **4.00** Ever Decreasing Circles **4.40** Last of the Summer Wine **6.00** Keeping Up Appearances **6.40** Open All Hours **7.20** Dad's Army. Classic comedy series. **8.00** The Good Life **10.00** Not Going Out **10.35** The Good Life **12.35am** Not Going Out **1.15** The Good Life **3.10-4.00am** Keeping Up Appearances

U&YESTERDAY Freeview 27

6.10am Great Coastal Railway Journeys **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **10.00** The World at War **11.00** True Evil: The Making of a Nazi **12.00noon** Antiques Roadshow **2.00** Bangers & Cash **4.00** The World at War **5.00** True Evil: The Making of a Nazi **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** Great Canal Journeys **8.00** Flipping Bangers **9.00** Bangers & Cash **11.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **1.00am** Abandoned Engineering **2.00-3.00am** The World at War

U&ALIBI

7.15am Murdoch Mysteries **9.00** Father Brown **10.00** The Mentalist **11.00** Hudson & Rex **12.00noon** Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries **1.00** Death in Paradise **2.00** Murdoch Mysteries **4.00** The Mentalist **5.00** Hudson & Rex **6.00** Father Brown **7.00** Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries **8.00** Death in Paradise **9.00** Dark Winds. After a grisly murder, Leaphorn and Chee strike out on their own when the FBI take over the case. **10.00** Death in Paradise **11.00** Father Brown **12.00m't** So Help Me Todd **1.00** Death in Paradise **2.00-4.00am** Murdoch Mysteries

SKY MAX

6.00am Hawaii Five-0 **8.00** The Flash **9.00** Stargate SG-1 **11.00** SEAL Team **12.00noon** The Flash **1.00** Hawaii Five-0 **3.00** S.W.A.T **4.00** NCIS: Los Angeles **5.00** SEAL Team **6.05** Stargate SG-1 **8.15** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **9.00** David Blaine: Real or Magic? The illusionist performs tricks. **10.00** David Blaine: Beyond Magic **11.00** Fear the Walking Dead **12.00m't** Mr Bigstuff **1.00** The Force: Manchester **2.00** Brit Cops: Frontline Crime UK **3.00** S.W.A.T **4.00** NCIS: Los Angeles **5.00-6.00am** Highway Patrol

SKY ATLANTIC

6.00am Fish Town **7.00** The Guest Wing **8.00** Boardwalk Empire **10.10** The Sopranos **12.20pm** Game of Thrones **2.30** The Wire **4.40** Westworld **5.45** Deadwood **6.50** Game of Thrones. Fantasy drama. **9.00** House of the Dragon **11.30** Deadwood **12.35am** All Her Fault **2.40** Game of Thrones **5.00-6.00am** Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets

SKY WITNESS

6.00am UK Border Force **7.00** Nothing to Declare **8.00** Border Patrol **9.00** Stop, Search, Seize **10.00** Nothing to Declare UK **11.00** A1: Britain's Longest Road **12.00noon** FBI **1.00** The Rookie **2.00** Send in the Dogs **3.00** Caught on Dashcam **4.00** Nothing to Declare **7.00** Police 24/7 **8.00** Law & Order: Criminal Intent **9.00** Law & Order: Special Victims Unit **10.00** FBI: Most Wanted **11.00** The Rookie **12.00m't** Law & Order: Criminal Intent **1.00** FBI **2.00** NEW Matlock **3.00** Doc **4.00** Stop, Search, Seize **5.00-6.00am** Road Wars

SKY COMEDY

8.00am Will & Grace **9.00** Ballers **10.10** Sex and the City **11.20** Entourage **12.30pm** Will & Grace **1.30** Sex and the City **2.40** Ballers **3.50** And Just Like That **4.45** The Office (US) **5.45** Will & Grace **6.45** Community **7.45** Sex and the City **9.00** Chris Ramsey: Live from London. A stand-up performance. **10.00** And Just Like That **10.55** Community **11.55** Entourage **1.05am** Ballers **2.25** Curb Your Enthusiasm **3.40-5.00am** Silicon Valley

DISCOVERY

6.00am How Do They Do It? **7.00** Junkyard Empire **9.00** Gold Rush **11.00** Kindig Customs **1.00pm** Deadliest Catch **3.00** How Do They Do It? **5.00** Alaska: Homestead Rescue **7.00** Wheeler Dealers World Tour **9.00** Gold Rush. Kevin recoils when Parker shows up to collect his money. **10.00** The Last Woodsmen. Jared must make a call whether to end the season early. **11.00** Expedition Unknown. Josh completes his dig. **12.00m't** Deadliest Catch **1.00** Gold Rush **2.00** The Last Woodsmen **3.00** Gold Divers **4.00-5.00am** Moonshiners

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

8.00am Megafactories **9.00** Air Crash Investigation: Special Report **10.00** Lost Treasures of Rome **11.00** WW2: Hell Under the Sea **12.00noon** World War II: The Apocalypse **1.00** Air Crash Investigation **3.00** Hitler's Last Stand **4.00** Drain the Oceans: Pacific Shockwave **5.00** Ice Road Rescue **6.00** Nazi Megastructures **7.00** Air Crash Investigation **8.00** Hitler Youth **10.00** Hitler the Junkie **11.00** Air Crash Investigation **12.00m't** Car S.O.S **1.00** To Catch a Smuggler **2.30** Lords of War **3.20** Food Factory **4.10** Exotic Animal ER: Double Dose **5.00-5.30am** Teleshopping

Radio

BBC RADIO 1

97.6-99.8MHz 6.58am Newsbeat **7.00** Radio 1 Breakfast with Greg James **10.30** Newsbeat **10.33** Rickie, Melvin and Charlie **12.45pm** Newsbeat **1.00** Nat and Vicky **3.30** Newsbeat **3.33** Going Home with Katie and Jerry **5.45** Newsbeat **6.00** Radio 1's New Music Show with Jack Saunders **8.00** Radio 1's Future Artists with Sian Eleri **10.00** Radio 1's Power Down Playlist with Sian Eleri **11.00** Martha **1.00am** Radio 1's Drum & Bass Mix: Chilled D&B **1.30** Radio 1's Drum & Bass Mix **2.00** Radio 1 Anthems **4.00** Radio 1 Pop Anthems **5.00-6.58am** Radio 1 Early Breakfast

BBC RADIO 2

88-91MHz 6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00noon** Tina Daheley **2.00** Trevor Nelson **4.00** Mark Goodier **6.30** Mark Goodier's Half Wower **7.00** Edith Bowman's Shiny Happy Playlist **7.30** Edith Bowman **9.00** The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum **10.00** The Good Groove with Melvin Odoom **12.00m't** OJ Borg **3.00** Dance Sounds of the 90s with Vernon Kay **4.00-6.30am** Owain Wyn Evans

BBC RADIO 3

90.2-92.4MHz 6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **4.00** Composer of the Week: Copland **5.00** In Tune **7.00** Classical Mixtape **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert **9.45** The Essay: Instrumental **10.00** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30-6.30am** Through the Night

CHOICE
Poems On The Underground
Radio 4, 4pm
Documentary to mark the 40th anniversary of London's Poems on the Underground project. We hear from one of the founders of the scheme, Judith Chernaik, about how it got started, and from the poets and passengers who have been part of one of the largest public art interventions of all time.

BBC RADIO 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz 6.00am Today **9.00** More or Less: The Stats of the Nation **9.30** Do You Call That Singing? **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** Screenshot **11.45** Book of the Week: Overwhelmed **12.00noon** News **12.04** Call You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One **1.45** Human Intelligence **2.00** The Archers **2.15** Drama: Almonds and Raisins **3.00** Lady Killers with Lucy Worsley **3.30** Heart and Soul **4.00** Poems on the Underground **4.30** What's Up Docs? **5.00** PM **5.57** Weather **6.00** News **6.30** Fags, Mags and Bags **7.00** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.00** File on 4 Investigates **8.40** In Touch **9.00** Crossing Continents **9.30** Great Lives **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Wedding Suit **11.00** Wild Inside **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.00m't** News **12.30** Book of the Week: Overwhelmed **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As BBC World Service **5.00** News **5.04** Yesterday in Parliament **5.32** Weather **5.34** Shipping Forecast **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45-6.00am** Farming

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

693/909kHz 6.00am 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Naga Munchetty **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **8.00** 5 Live Sport **9.30** 5 Live Sport: The Euro Leagues Podcast **10.30** Tony Livesey **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo **5.00-6.00am** Wake Up to Money

BBC RADIO WALES

FM: 94.6MHz 6.00am Radio Wales News Update **6.05** Wake Up with Radio Wales **6.31** Can I Believe My Eyes? **7.00** Radio Wales Breakfast **9.00** Bronwen Lewis **11.59** The Phone In **2.00pm** Behnaz Akhgar **5.00** Radio Wales Drive **6.30** Science Cafe **7.00** Molly Palmer **10.00** Eleri Sion **12.00m't** Relax with Radio Wales **1.00-6.00am** As Radio 5 Live

CLASSIC FM

100-102MHz 6.30am Breakfast **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Alexander Armstrong **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00-6.30am** Early Breakfast

ABSOLUTE RADIO

DAB 6.00am Dave Berry **10.00** Leona Graham **1.00pm** Ben Burrell **4.00** Bush and Richie **7.00** Danielle Perry **10.00** Jay Lawrence **1.00-6.00am** Dan Noble

Movies

FILM4

11.00am Rio Grande (1950/U) Western, with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. ★★★★ **1.10pm It Came from Outer Space** (1953/PG) Sci-fi adventure, with Richard Carlson. ★★★ **2.50 The Bedford Incident** (1965/PG) Cold War thriller, starring Richard Widmark. ★★★★ **4.55 Prince Valiant** (1954/U) Adventure, with Robert Wagner and Janet Leigh. ★★ **6.55 The Greatest Showman** (2017/PG) Musical drama, starring Hugh Jackman and Michelle Williams. ★★★★★ **9.00 Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol** (2011/12) The secret agent team is falsely implicated in a bombing, and pursues the real terrorist around the globe. Action adventure sequel, starring Tom Cruise. ★★★★ **11.40 Team America: World Police** (2004/15) Satirical puppet comedy, with the voices of Trey Parker and Matt Stone. ★★★ **1.40-3.55am Flag Day** (2021/15) Crime drama, starring Sean Penn and Dylan Penn. ★★★

SKY CINEMA PREMIERE

6.20am A Make or Break Holiday (2025/U) Romantic drama, starring Jennifer-Juniper Angeli and Marlee Walchuk. ★★ **7.45 The Phoenician Scheme** (2025/15) Wes Anderson's comedy, starring Benicio Del Toro and Mia Threapleton. ★★★★ **9.30 Karate Kid: Legends** (2025/12) Drama sequel, starring Jackie Chan. ★★★ **11.05 Sinners** (2025/15) See 10.00pm. ★★★★ **1.25pm 28 Years Later** (2025/15) See 8.00pm. ★★★★ **3.25 A Minecraft Movie** (2025/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Jason Momoa. ★★★★ **5.10 Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning** (2025/12) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise and Hayley Atwell. ★★★★ **8.00 28 Years Later** (2025/15) Horror, starring Jodie Comer. ★★★★ **10.00 Sinners** (2025/15) Thriller, with Michael B Jordan and Michael B Jordan. ★★★★ **12.20am Safe House** (2025/15) Thriller, starring Holt McCallany. ★★★ **2.00 Hallow Road** (2025/15) Thriller, starring Rosamund Pike and Matthew Rhys. ★★★★ **3.30 All the Devils Are Here** (2025/15) Thriller, starring Eddie Marsan and Sam Claflin. ★★★ **5.00-6.25am She's Making a List** (2025/U) Comedy, starring Lacey Chabert. ★★

SKY CINEMA DRAMA

4.05pm Parachute (2023/15) Comedy, with Courtney Eaton and Thomas Mann. ★★★★ **6.00 Dear John** (2010/12) Drama, with Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried. ★★★★ **8.00 PS I Love You** (2007/12) A series of letters written to a woman by her husband before he died sends her on numerous adventures and helps her to move on. Romantic drama, with Hilary Swank and Gerard Butler. ★★★★ **10.15 Dunkirk** (2017/12) Drama, with Fionn Whitehead and Kenneth Branagh. ★★★★ **12.05am Miranda's Victim** (2023/15) Drama, starring Emily VanCamp . ★★★ **2.15 Night Call** (2024/15) Drama, starring Jonas Bloquet and Mustii. ★★★ **4.00-6.05am Carmen** (2022/15) Musical, with Melissa Barrera and Paul Mescal. ★★★

SKY CINEMA FAMILY

4.15pm A Dog's Purpose (2017/PG) Comedy drama, starring Josh Gad . ★★★★ **6.00 The Smurfs** (2011/U) Fantasy comedy, starring Neil Patrick Harris. ★★★ **7.55 The Smurfs 2** (2013/U) Fantasy comedy sequel, starring Hank Azaria. ★★ **9.55 The Karate Kid Part II** (1986/PG) Martial arts sequel, starring Ralph Macchio. ★★★★ **12.00m't My Penguin Friend** (2024/PG) Drama, starring Jean Reno. ★★★★ **1.50am Bookworm** (2024/12) Comedy, starring Elijah Wood and Nell Fisher. ★★★ **3.50-6.00am The Portable Door** (2023/PG) Fantasy adventure, starring Christoph Waltz and Sam Neill. ★★★★

TALKING PICTURES TV

4.40pm Heavens Above! (1963/PG) Satirical comedy, starring Peter Sellers. ★★★★ **6.55 The Man from UNCLE** Spy drama. **8.00 Francis Durbridge's Melissa** **9.05 The Lost World** Period adventure. **10.40 The Lost World** Period adventure. **12.15am Echo of Barbara** (1961/PG) Crime drama, starring Mervyn Johns. ★★★ **1.40 Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense** **3.15-5.00am The Naked Kiss** (1964/18) Drama, starring Constance Towers. ★★★★★

GREAT! MYSTERY

8.00pm Unforgettable Crime drama. **9.00 Martha's Vineyard Mysteries: A Beautiful Place to Die** (2020/PG) Drama, starring Jesse Metcalfe and Sarah Lind. ★★ **10.55 Diagnosis Murder: The House on Sycamore Street** Detective drama. **12.55am Fatal Trust** (2016/12) Thriller, starring Rya Kihlstedt and Patrick Fischler. ★★★ **2.35 Killer Night Shift** (2018/15) Thriller, starring Ashleigh Dorrell. ★★ **4.00-6.00am Killer Contractor** (2019/PG) Thriller, starring Alyshia Ochse. ★★★

Winter Sale

Reader Offer in partnership with **Yimbly.com**

NEXT-LEVEL SUPPORT, UPGRADED COMFORT

The Northfield Dual Motor Riser Recliner from Artemis Home is designed with you in mind. It combines ease, support, and a touch of luxury to help you relax in comfort and confidence. Whether you're easing into the afternoon with a cup of tea or getting the help you need to stand up more easily, the Northfield offers dependable support and comfort that fits seamlessly into your daily routine.

Thanks to its clever dual motor system, you can raise your legs and recline your back separately. This means you can find the exact position that suits you, whether it's feet up for a well-earned rest, or fully reclined for a cosy nap. Smooth, quiet operation makes every movement effortless.

ELEGANT SUPPORT THAT LASTS

The chair's sturdy wooden frame supports up to 130kg and is upholstered in supple bonded leather that feels soft to the touch and looks timeless in any home. Generous padding through the back, seat and armrests cushions the body gently, making it easy to sit comfortably for longer periods.

COMFORT YOU CAN FEEL

The Northfield doesn't just look after your posture; it also helps soothe tired muscles. Built-in massage points target your lower and upper back, while a warming lumbar heat function helps ease stiffness and encourages relaxation. It's especially comforting during cooler months or for those with everyday aches and pains.

NO-FUSS DELIVERY, FULLY ASSEMBLED

With two-man delivery and full in-room setup included, there's nothing to do but sit back and enjoy. Just plug in, press a button, and let the Northfield take care of the rest.

- ✓ Dual motor-operated rise and recline
- ✓ Warming lumbar heat function
- ✓ Massage points in the seat, lower and upper back
- ✓ Bonded leather upholstery
- ✓ Size: H96 x W86 x D93 cm

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Trustpilot

RUSSELL GRANT

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

Achieving the goals you have set for yourself in 2026 is not going to be easy and you know this. You have always been fond of a challenge. One aim will call for dedication, perseverance and self-confidence. Even more helpful would be having the backing of your loved ones. Discuss your plans and gauge their response too.

For more call **0905 789 4171**
(80p/min + network access charge)

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

You look to the future and you are filled with optimism even though you can't really explain why. You feel determined and positive and eager to move forward towards a significant goal. These things are possible. An older family member may offer you some advice, but it's entirely up to you whether to follow it.

For more call **0905 789 4172**
(80p/min + network access charge)

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

You might feel a twinge of regret for having declined an offer in the past, especially when you notice how well someone else is doing because of it. Don't worry though as more opportunities will present themselves soon and the timing will feel better. So, rather than focusing on the dark cloud, start searching for its silver lining.

For more call **0905 789 4173**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 23

Life flows smoothly without any obstacles or challenges in sight, at least for the moment. The issue is, you might not want everything to be handed to you so easily and if you don't find some proper excitement soon, then you will be looking or planning for experiences that could bring more challenges into your life.

For more call **0905 789 4174**
(80p/min + network access charge)

LEO JULY 24-AUG 23

Sudden changes to your schedule, a no-show from someone who was supposed to be there and issues with an electronic device will all contribute to a rather frustrating day for you. An older colleague or friend will provide some guidance, but be cautious: it may not be current or it could turn out to be plain misleading.

For more call **0905 789 4175**
(80p/min + network access charge)

VIRGO AUG 24-SEPT 23

As one job ends, you won't be satisfied just sitting idle and twiddling your thumbs. Being a Virgo, you often feel the need to stay active, ideally by lending a hand to others and doing good in the wider community. So why not take a moment to look around and see if anyone or a local project could use some help or support?

For more call **0905 789 4176**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SAGITTARIUS NOV 23-DEC 21

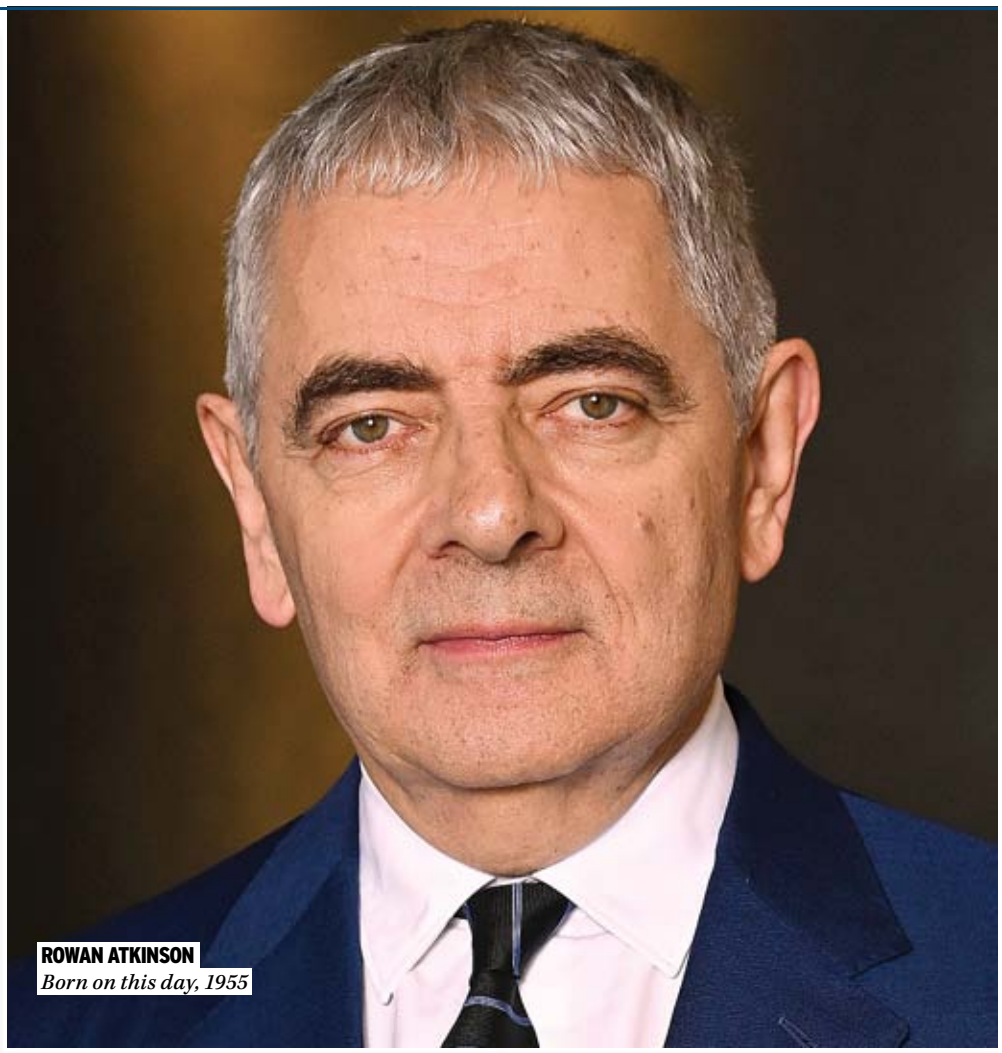
No matter what, resist the temptation to hide an unpaid bill at the back of a drawer, along with the others. Reorganising your finances could be all it takes to tackle a pile of overlooked invoices. A practical friend or relative will be happy to give advice. It is a good day for business and for calm planning for the future.

For more call **0905 789 4179**
(80p/min + network access charge)

CAPRICORN DEC 22-JAN 20

Take a look at existing projects from a fresh perspective. You will come up with new methods to add to the interest and excitement of your current work. This could involve starting something from scratch. Someone whose creativity you admire is keen to get involved, making this an excellent opportunity for new beginnings.

For more call **0905 789 4180**
(80p/min + network access charge)



ROWAN ATKINSON
Born on this day, 1955

LIBRA SEPT 24-OCT 23

Family activities will keep you interested and occupied. Projects calling for creativity and thought will be more appealing than anything that's overly physical. You may even surprise yourself by the thoughts and ideas coming to your mind later in the day. Make a note of them so you can remind yourself of these later.

For more call **0905 789 4177**
(80p/min + network access charge)

SCORPIO OCT 24-NOV 22

Something you learn will cause you to want to rethink your objectives but you aren't yet ready to discuss these particular ideas with others. A friend will catch you off guard and you could find yourself admitting to something you hadn't wanted them to know. All meetings and communications will be filled with little surprises.

For more call **0905 789 4178**
(80p/min + network access charge)

AQUARIUS JAN 21-FEB 19

With the encouragement of your friends and family, this is the perfect time to share your personal hopes and dreams for the year ahead. One person you are seeing today might have the ability to make a wish come true as well. Likewise, you could be able to take a friend's idea or dream and make it happen for them.

For more call **0905 789 4181**
(80p/min + network access charge)

PISCES FEB 20-MARCH 20

You will feel rather disappointed after listening to what a friend or a co-worker has to share. It will be a shame that they have decided to pull out of joint plans but don't worry – new and better opportunities will be heading your way very shortly. Hold off on making any big decisions until later in the week. No need to rush.

For more call **0905 789 4182**
(80p/min + network access charge)

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge – maximum of 5 minutes duration. You must be over 18 and have the bill payer's permission. Service provider Spoke. Helpline 0333 202 3390

NUTWOOD TALES

To order a copy of the Rupert Annual 2024 (£10.99) visit www.expressbookshop.com or call Express Bookshop on 020 3176 3832. Free UK P&P on online orders over £25.

RUPERT AND THE PENGUINS No.3

He runs to look. "Why, it's a pump!"
"Ah, yes!" A loud voice makes him jump.

"I'm Captain Chubb. Do stay a while,"
Says the explorer with a smile.

Following the pipe, Rupert scrambles up the slope until he reaches the little engine. "Why, it's a pump!" he gasps. "And it's taking water from the river." "Yes, and I need lots of it. You see, I'm making a pool in this hollow." The little bear swings round, startled, at the voice. The speaker is a bearded man, dressed in heavy clothes. "You can stay as long as you like, little bear," chuckles the man kindly. "My name's Captain Chubb. I'm an explorer."

CALVIN AND HOBBES BILL WATTERSON

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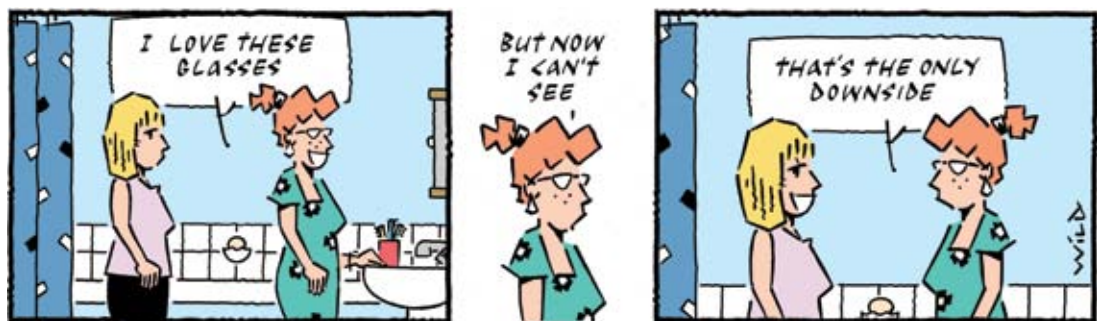
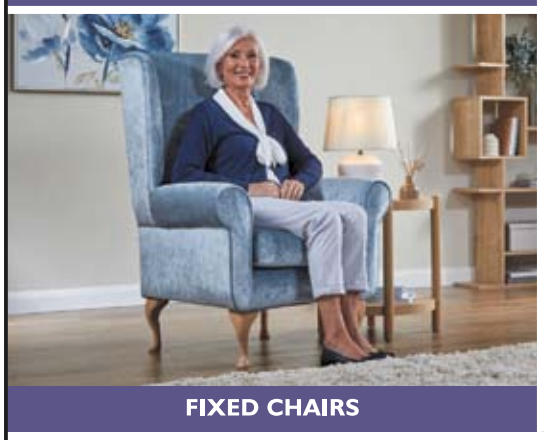
A CRASH TEST DUMMY! NOW I CAN SEE IF THE HILL IS SAFE TO GO DOWN.
OFF YOU GO!
TUES
OOH, I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK.
WELL, I WOULDN'T HAVE STEERED LIKE THAT! HE DESERVED IT!

FAITH, HOPE AND SUE LISA WILD





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'Puffer nutter' Paul's ode to trains is a must-read for any railway fan

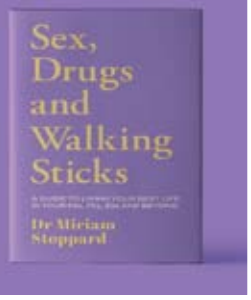
Foreword by Pete Waterman

ON SALE IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON

Sex, Drugs and Walking Sticks

by Dr Miriam Stoppard

AMAZON



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PRIMULA VULGARIS RASPBERRY

While most plants sleep through winter, Primula vulgaris 'Raspberry Rose' provides vibrant colour and structure in the garden. Raspberry-pink flowers with sunny yellow centres rise above a neat evergreen rosette from late winter into spring, ideal for shaded borders, woodland gardens, or patio containers. Hardy to -10°C, it thrives in moist, well-drained soil with part sun or part shade and tolerates cooler sun. Plant in autumn or early spring to establish roots for long-lasting blooms. Supplied as one 1L pot, it is low-maintenance, resilient, and offers intermittent reblooming, making it perfect for UK gardeners seeking reliable early-season interest while supporting pollinators in a naturalistic planting.

- Plant type: Perennial
- Flowering period: January - March
- Position: Part sun / part shade
- Height / Spread in maturity: 20cm/20cm
- Temperatures: Hardy down to -15°C
- Good for: Borders, pots, containers, hanging baskets, pollinators, low-maintenance gardens, ground cover, informal planting, front of beds

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Trustpilot

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PLAN AHEAD FOR PLANTING

The early months of the new year are ideal for getting organised and preparing a garden space before the growing season begins. This 3.5 x 2m polytunnel greenhouse offers a spacious interior for vegetables, flowers and greenery, with room to add shelves for order and ease. A steel frame with metal support rods provides strength, while mesh windows support airflow. The large roll up door allows access and guy ropes and ground stakes help keep it secure.

- Made from: Steel, polyethylene
- Dimensions: H200 x W350 x D200cm
- Assembly: Self-assembly required

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ON SALE IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON

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City & Business

Nissan loses £888m ahead of recovery plan kicking in

By **Jon Robinson**

THE UK arm of Nissan lost £888million during its latest financial year, ahead of a major cash injection and recovery plan taking effect.

The Sunderland-headquartered car giant posted the huge pre-tax loss, which is up significantly from the £67m it lost in the prior 12 months.

Nissan said its latest accounts include an impairment charge of £656m against the value of its fixed assets.

It said the impairment assessment was "based on the latest forecast information – with the key drivers being the challenges faced in full electrification of our current model portfolio, customer demand and increasing competition in the industry".

Leaf on Sunderland production line

However, the arm received a capital injection of £990m from its immediate parent company on November 20.

Nissan said this would "strengthen the balance sheet, returning it to a positive net assets position".

The latest accounts also show that turnover fell from £7.3bn to £6.6bn during its latest financial year. Total vehicle production dropped from 325,000 to 276,000, mainly because of falling demand as well as the Leaf model ending production in February 2024.

The production of a new version of the car started last month.

Nissan made 170,000 of its most popular model, the Qashqai, in the year – down from 199,000.

The company also closed its Sunderland casting plant in September, with production having been extended due to additional orders beyond the original closure date in 2023.

Nissan added that the reduction in its headcount, from 6,966 to 6,703, was "mainly driven by direct production staff, as a result of lower volumes".

In May 2025, the Japanese car-maker, headquartered in Yokohama, confirmed that it would cut another 11,000 jobs across the globe and shut seven of its factories.

The cutback brought the total number of jobs lost in the year to that date to around 20,000.

GAMBLING CHIEFS' DIVIDEND JACKPOT

Betfred, steered by Fred, top, and Peter Done made a huge profit

THE billionaire brothers who founded Betfred have shared a bumper payday after the gambling firm raked in almost £1.5billion.

The Warrington-based business posted a turnover of £1.45bn for the 78 weeks to March 30, 2025, with a pre-tax profit of £188.6m. The figures are a big leap from those covering 2023.

It was also confirmed that Betfred's shareholders, including Peter and Fred Done, and Fred's daughter Nicola Done-Orrell, received a dividend of £25.3m in the year.

Betfred had ceased trading in nine US states and sold its firm in Spain. It said: "There has been an increase in performance across the group mainly due to exiting unprofitable overseas businesses."

AT A GLANCE

STOCK MARKET		
FTSE 100	10004.6 ▲	+53.4
FTSE 250	22593.9 ▲	+184.7
FTSE ALL SHARE	5388.5 ▲	+30.4
Shares Traded	12294.1 million	

POPULAR SHARES ON THE RISE		
Abrdn	212¼	+4¾
Aviva	687	+3½
BAE Systems	1851	+97
Barclays	486¾	+7¼
HSBC Holdings	1207¼	+15½
Int Consolidated Airlines	425	+5
Lloyds Banking Group	100	+¾
NatWest Group	665½	+8
Rolls-Royce Holdings	1231½	+34½
Tesco	442½	+½
Vodafone Group	99¾	+½

POPULAR SHARES UNCHANGED	
Sainsbury (J)	328

POPULAR SHARES ON THE SLIDE		
AstraZeneca	13384	-208
BP	435¼	-2¾
BT Group	181¼	-2½
Centrica	172¼	-2
GSK	1820½	-11
Marks & Spencer Group	322¾	-5½
National Grid	1150	-7½
Saga	383½	-3½
Shell	2738	-21½
Unilever	4699	-123½
Whitbread	2500	-37

WORLD MARKETS		
WALL STREET	48977.2 ▲	+594.8
TOKYO	51832.8 ▲	+1493.3
HONG KONG	26347.2 ▲	+8.8
GERMANY	24868.7 ▲	+329.4
FRANCE	8211.5 ▲	+16.3

STERLING VALUE		
Dollar	1.353 ▲	+0.007
Yen	211.478 ▲	+0.395
Euro	1.155 ▲	+0.006

DOLLAR VALUE		
Dollar/Yen	156.348 ▼	-0.4813
Dollar/Euro	0.854 ▲	+0.0003

COMMODITIES	
GOLD($)	▲4416.79
KRUGERRAND(£)	▲3281.76
SILVER(pence)	▲5596.67
BRENT CRUDE($)	▲ 61.20

OTHER INDICATORS	
Base rate	3.75%
Halifax mortgage rate	5.95%
Retail Price Index	+3.8% (CPI +3.2%)
House price Index	+1.7%
Unemployment	1,832,000

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Canada	1.80 dollar
China	8.79 renminbi
Czech Rep.	26.06 koruna
Denmark	8.15 krone
Eurozone	1.13 euro
Hong Kong	9.83 dollar
Hungary	414.12 forint
Israel	4.01 shekel
Japan	202.35 yen
Jordan	0.89 dinar
Mexico	22.88 peso
New Zealand	2.26 dollar
Norway	13.10 krone
Poland	4.60 zloty
Saudi Arabia	4.80 riyal
South Africa	21.25 rand
Sweden	11.81 krona
Switzerland	1.03 franc
Thailand	40.52 baht
Turkey	53.76 lira
United States	1.32 dollar

Losses rose at LBC's owner

Radio giant Global growing despite £140m blow

MEDIA giant Global, the owner of radio stations including LBC, Capital and Heart, lost £140million in is latest financial year, despite revenue racing towards £1billion.

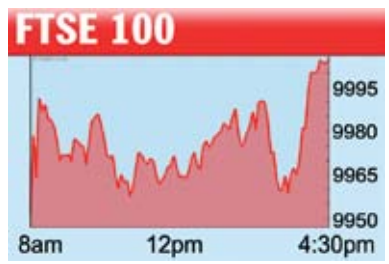
The latest figure means the business has lost in the region of £820m before tax since it last made a pre-tax profit – £25.1m in the year to March 31, 2018. However revenue for the year rose from £858.1m to £898m, with £430.9m from audio and £467m from outdoor advertising, according to accounts filed with companies house.

Global, which also owns Radio X and Classic FM, was founded by Ashley Tabor-King in 2007. In a statement signed off by the board, the London-headquartered firm said: "The group is well positioned for further growth within both our key operations of audio and outdoor, with continued strong commercial and operating performance and ongoing investment."

++ THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 ++

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
3i Group	3250#	+40	4459	2999
A.B. Foods	2148#	+23	2337	1841½
Admiral Group	†			
Airtel Africa	364¼	+2½	370	114½
Alliance Trust	1288	+14	1324	1050
Anglo American	3142	+102	3157¼	2003¾
Antofagasta	3459	+203	3459	1383
Ashtead Group	5326	+226	5538	3659
AstraZeneca	13384	-208	14148	9667
Auto Trader	584¾#	+9½	908½	571¾
Aviva	687	+3½	692½	468¾
Babcock International	1347#	+74	1347	485¾
BAE Systems	1851	+97	2060	1145½
Barclays	486¾	+7¼	489	241¾
Barratt Development	383¼	+4¼	482¼	350
Beazley Group	815½	-1½	973	769
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3980	+48	4324	3462
BP	435¼	-2¾	476¼	331¾
British Amer.Tob	4067#	-122	4421	2905
British Land	405#	+7½	420½	321¼
BT Group	181¼#	-2½	222¾	138¼
Bunzl	2044#	-20	3452	1995
Burberry Group	1300	-16½	1371½	627¾
Centrica	172¼	-2	180	132¼
Coca-Cola HBC	3714	-54	4034	2708
Compass Group	2316	-18	2843	2286
Convatec Group	240¾	+1¼	295½	219¼
CRH	9408	+80	9538	6142
Croda International	2728	-14	3383	2465
DCC	4424	-120	5600	4404
Diageo	1634	+26½	2555	1583
Diploma	5390	+95	5650	3624
EasyJet	515	+1¼	587¾	427½
Entain	777¾	+6½	1022	501¼
Experian Group	3427	+95	4088	3091
F&C Inv Tst	1259#	+6	1265	962
Flutter Entert.	16435	+315	23630	14670
Fresnillo	3496	+144	3568	644

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Games Workshop	18520#	+80	19840	12410
GlaxoSmithKline	1820½#	-11	1848½	1264
Glencore	419¼	+10½	422½	230
Haleon	372¼	+2¼	415¼	326½
Halma	3556#	+56	3658	2360
Hikma	1527	+4	2340	1495
Hiscox	1402	+4	1429	1035
HSBC Holdings	1207¼	+15½	1209½	713¼
IMI	2524	+24	2528	1606
Imperial Brands	3047	-78	3312	2579
Informa	884½	+10½	993½	640¼
InterContinental Htl	10029¼	-3815¾	10454½	5489
Intermediate Cap.Grp	2100#	+44	2450	1569
Intertek Group	4606	+52	5385	4064
Intl Consolidated Airlines	425	+5	427½	224½
JD Sports	87½	+1¾	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	319¼	+2¾	320½	228¼
Land Securities	624½#	+5	650	499½
Legal & General	265½	+3	265½	215¼
Lloyds Banking Grp	100	+¾	100¼	53
London & Stamford Prop.	189¼#	+½	204½	170½
London Stock Ex	9040	+236	12095	8138



COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
M&G	296½	+5	296½	172¾
Marks & Spencer	322¾#	-5½	411¼	318½
Melrose	620	+10	680	386
Mondi	911¼	-7½	1326	819
National Grid	1150#	-7½	1182	910¾
NatWest Group	665½	+8	668¾	374½
Next	13590#	+55	14580	9028
Pearson	1040	+20½	1379	984½
Pershing Square Hold	4776	-48	5090	3244
Persimmon	1360	+½	1405	1037½
Phoenix Group	746	+3	749½	479½
Prudential	1178½	+23½	1186¼	595¼
Reckitt Benckiser	5988	+6	6080	4633
RELX	3090	+107	4135	2972
Rentokil Initial	445	+1½	448½	309½
Rightmove	514¾	+2½	823¾	500
Rio Tinto	6091	+105	6131	4117
Rolls-Royce Group	1231½	+34½	1240	563½
Sage Group	1063½	+13½	1348	1038½
Sainsbury (J)	328		355¾	228¾
Schroders	419½	+10¾	428¼	289¼
Scottish Mortgage	1200	+18	1201½	815¼
SEGRO	716¼	+3½	732¼	599
Severn Trent	2809#	-4	2852	2338
Shell	2738	-21½	2931½	2291½
Smith & Nephew	1228	+10½	1435	937¾
Smiths Group	2426	+54	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	2933	+13	4495	2558
Spirax-Sarco	6855	+15	8190	5445
SSE	2254#	+23	2307	1463½
St James's Place	1453	+29½	1462½	791
Standard Chartered	1855½	+11½	1875½	878¾
Tesco	442½	+½	475½	314½
Unilever	4699	-123½	6177½	4658½
United Utilities	1200#	-6	1237	937½
Vodafone Group	99¾#	+½	101	64
Weir Group	2922	+50	2990	1984
Whitbread	2500	-37	3274	2335

Borrowing goes up despite fears

PEOPLE took on more credit during November despite fears of tax rises in the Budget.

The Bank of England has revealed consumer credit went up to £2.1bn, compared to £1.7bn in October.

Borrowing through credit cards was £1bn over the month while other forms such as motor finance and personal loans rose to £1.1bn.

The Bank's data also showed that the number of mortgage approvals slightly dipped from 65,010 to 64,530, while net borrowing of mortgage debt increased to £4.5bn.

Capital Economics analyst Alex Kerr said: "The figures suggest there isn't much scope for a pick-up in consumer spending in 2026."

He added that growth in annual RDHI – real household disposable income – will slow.

+ BG + Barclays + BT + Centrica + Dixons Carphone + First Group + HSBC + Kingfisher + Marks & Spencer + Next + Prudential + Rolls-Royce + Sainsburys + Tesco + Unilever + Vodafone + Whitbread + WPP

SHARES AT A GLANCE

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Aerospace & Defence				
Avon Rubber	1844	+40	2180	1338
Babcock International	1347#	+74	1347	485¾
BAE Systems	1851	+97	2060	1145½
Chemring Group	492½	+19½	593	297½
QinetiQ Group	456¾	+12½	572	361
Rolls-Royce Group	1231½	+34½	1240	563½
Senior	209½	+7½	209½	115¾
Alternative Energy				
Porvair	820	-16	856	626
Banks				
Barclays	486¾	+7¼	489	241¾
Bco Santander	893	+9	900	362
Close Brothers	525	-1	550½	208
HSBC Holdings	1207¼	+15½	1209½	713¼
Investec	570	+1½	596	414
Lloyds Banking Grp	100	+¾	100¼	53
Metro Bank	122¾	+3½	133½	81
NatWest Group	665½	+8	668¾	374½
Paragon Group	863½	+4	970	686½
Standard Chartered	1855½	+11½	1875½	878¾
Beverages				
Barr (AG)	623	+6	711	558
Coca-Cola HBC	3714	-54	4034	2708
Diageo	1634	+26½	2555	1583
Chemicals				
Carclo	57½	+5½	80	21
Croda International	2728	-14	3383	2465
Elementis	169	+2½	176½	115
Johnson Matthey	2302#	+118	2360	1156
Synthomer	64½	+1	158¼	46
Treatt	211	+7	468½	186½
Victrex	656	-4	1068	589
Construction & Materials				
Balfour Beatty	720	+6	737	390½
Costain Group	157½	+¼	168	86
CRH	9408	+80	9538	6142
Dialight	364	+17	370	89
Galliford Try	519	+7	539	321
Gleeson (MJ)	424	+2	538	320
Keller Group	1666	+20	1674	1240
Kier Group	220	+3½	231½	115¼
Marshalls	180¾	+3½	293	162
Morgan Sindall	4745	+110	4975	2945
Severfield-Rowen	28½	+½	52¼	19
Smart (J) & Co	132½#		137½	110
Electricity				
Drax Group	849½	+4½	855	536½
SSE	2254#	+23	2307	1463½
Telecom Plus	1382	+42	2085	1316
Electronic & Electrical Equipment				
Acal	595#	+4	738	486
Halma	3556#	+56	3658	2360
Oxford Instruments	2100#	+45	2165	1500
Renishaw	3605	+55	3725	2145
TT Electronics	116	-2	154	73
XP Power	900	+6	1314	621
Equity Investment Instruments				
Aberdeen Asian Sml	373	+2	382	256
Aberforth Smll.Co.	1582	+2	1598	1212
Acorn Income				
Albion Tech.& Gen. VCT	66		71	65½
Alliance Trust	1288	+14	1324	1050
Aurora Inv.Tst.	272		273¼	212½
AVI Global Tst	259	+1	266½	202
Baillie Gifford Japan	904	+6	951	657
Baillie Gifford Shin Nip	130½	-½	136½	95½
Bankers Inv.Tst	133½	+1	135	101
Baronsmead VCT.2	48½		52	46½
BH Macro GBP	400	-1	414	371½
Biotech Growth Trust	1175	-25	1285	620
BlackRock Mining	873	+38	875	406½
Bluehone AiM VCT2	28¼#		31	28¼
British Assets Tst	26¼	-¼	49¼	26
Brunner Inv.Tst	1456	+24	1469½	1140
Caledonia Inv.	3801/2#	+½	391½	334½
City Natural Res.Yld	364	+10	365	165¾
City Of London	533	+1	537	411½
Dunedin Ent.IT.				
Dunedin Income	305		309	262
Edin Wwide Inv	217	+4	219	143
Edin.Inv.Tst.	821	+1	839	680
Edin.US Tracker	376½#	+7	377	289½
Elderstreet VCT	38¾		41	36¾
F&C Cap&Inc.	344	-2½	348½	287
F&C Inv Tst	1259#	+6	1265	962
F&C Smaller Cos	178#	+1½	178½	136½
F&C US Smaller Companies	1350	-37½	1522½	1115
Fidelity Asian	604	-4	628	454
Fidelity European	424	+3	431	338½
Fidelity Special	418½#	-½	423	295½
Finsbury Gwth&In	824	+8	962	795
Foresight Tech.VCT	65½		75½	62
Genesis E.M.F.	1090	+6	1100	632
Graphite Ent	1496	-6	1600	1070
Hansa Tst 'A'	267		272	190
Hansa Tst Plc	271	-1	278	192½
Henderson Far Est	245½		253½	190½
Henderson High Inc	189½#	-¾	192	151
Herald Inv.Tst.	2415	+10	2560	1738
HGCapital Tst.	507	+3	538	448
HSBC Infrastructure	116	+¼	125¼	106
Impax Env.Mkt	399½	+1	416½	310½
Int.Biotech.Tst.	934#	-32	996	480
International Public	124½	-½	127¾	107¾
Invesco Asia.	440#	+5	440	300
Invesco Perp UK	371	+1	388½	313½
JPM American	1116	+8	1186	869
JPM Asian	467½	+11	468	331½
JPM Claverhouse	868		886	660
JPM Emerg Mkt	141½	+1¾	143¼	95
JPM Euro Sml Co.	601#	+3	605	444½
JPM Global Emerging	175½#	+2½	176½	118½
JPM Indian	1018	-6	1106	904
JPM Japanese	705#	+15	747	493
JPM Overseas IT	577	+4	610	480
JPM Smaller Co	323	+2	338	253
JPM US Sml Co.	406	+6	516	338
Jupiter Euro.	906	+12	959	757
JZ Capital Partners	189		220	184
Law Debenture	1074#	+10	1082	788
Lowland Invest Co	162½#	+2	162½	114½
Majedie Inv.	274	+6	284	230
Manchester&Lon.	802	+8	944	512
Martin Currie Prtflo Tst.	355	+4	386	295
Maven Income And Growth VCT 3	3½#		38	33½
Mercantile Inv Tst	256½#	+2	258½	202½
Merchants Tst	599		604	474
Mid Wynd Int.	780	+12	836	664
Monks Inv.Tst.	1518	+32	1548	1036
Montanaro Euro Tst.	165#		183½	138
Montanaro Uk	101	+¾	106½	87¾
Murray Inc.Tst.	914	-2	938	754
Murray Int.Tst	331#	-2½	337	239
New India	784	-2	832	686
New Star Inv.Tst.	127	+3½	127	100
North Atl.Smlr.Tst				
Northern 2 VCT	53½#		57	52½
Northern Venture	56½#		58½	55½
Oxford Tech 2 VCT	6½		7	5½
Pacific Assets.	373	+5	378	302
Pacific Horizon	814	+17	818	507
Pantheon Int.	376	-3	381	266
Pershing Square Hold	4776	-48	5090	3244
Polar Cap.Tech	471½	+8½	481	255½
RCM Technology Trust	534	+10	548	307
RIT Capital Partners	2245		2275	1722
Ruffer Investment	293½	-1	304	264
Schroder Asia	683#	+10	685	461½
Schroder Inc.	349#	+½	354	255
Schroder Japan	318#	+5	320	209
Schroder UK	205	+1	209	158½
Schroder UK M&S	712	+4	716	520
Scottish American	508	-1	525	454½
Scottish Mortgage	1200	+18	1201½	815¼
Shires Inc.	311#	-½	316½	222
Small Comp Div.Tst	140#	+½	161	124
Standard Life Equity	402#	-2	410	288½
Standard Life UK Sml	503	+1	531	426
Temple Bar.	382½	+1	384½	258
Templeton Emrg.	243½#	+4½	244½	151¾
The European Inv.Tst	109		110	84
Throgmorton Tst.	620	+3	624	469
TR Euro.Growth	218½	+1	221	163
TR Prop. IT	317#	+1	338½	277½
Witan Pacific	308	-6	322	214
Wwide Healthcare	370½#	-2½	397	265½
Financial Services				
3i Group	3250#	+40	4459	2999
3i Infrastructure	372½#	-2½	377½	301
Abrdn	212¼	+4¾	212¼	123¾
Ashmore Group	187	+12	199¾	125
Guinness Peat Group	82½	-1	96	68¼
IG Group	1329	+23	1335	913
Intermediate Cap.Grp.	2100#	+44	2450	1569
International Pers Fin	235	+1	235½	121½
IP Group	59½	+1½	65	34¾
Jupiter Fund Man.	162	+2½	163	68
Liontrust Asset Man	267#	+2½	473½	248
London Stock Ex.	9040	+236	12095	8138
M&G	296½	+5	296½	172¾
Man Group	233	+2	234¾	154¾
Provident Financial	115¾	-2¾	128½	45
Rathbone Brothers	1942	+28	1950	1406
S & U	2210	+10	2230	1330
Schroders	419½	+10¾	428¼	289¼
St James's Place	1453	+29½	1462½	791
Tullett Prebon	254½	+1½	311½	228
Walker Crips Group	13¼		16½	7½
Fixed Line Telecommunications				
Airtel Africa	364¼	+2½	370	114½
BT Group	181¼#	-2½	222¾	138¼
Food & Drug Retailers				
Greggs	1757	+80	2832	1418
Marks & Spencer	322¾#	-5½	411¼	318½
Ocado	236½	+1¼	395½	172¼
Sainsbury (J)	328		355¾	228¾
Tesco	442½	+½	475½	314½
Food Producers				
A.B. Foods.	2148#	+23	2337	1841½
Anglo-Eastern	1390	-15	1425	602
Carr's Milling	136½	-2½	157	101½
Cranswick.	4895#	-40	5490	4625
Glanbia	1243	-13	1368½	788¼
Greencore Group	243	-2½	278½	169¼
Kerry Grp 'A' Shs.	6583	-69¼	8748½	6392½
Premier Foods	168	-1½	214½	167
REA Holdings	127½	+2½	128½	61½
Tate & Lyle	366#	-1	661	358
Gas, Water & Multiutilities				
Centrica	172¼	-2	180	132¼
National Grid	1150#	-7½	1182	910¾
Pennon Group	531½		552	387½
Severn Trent	2809#	-4	2852	2338
United Utilities	1200#	-6	1237	937½
General Industrials				
Bunzl.	2044#	-20	3452	1995
Goodwin.	22300	+800	23300	6180
Melrose	620	+10	680	386
Mondi.	911¼	-7½	1326	819
Smiths Group	2426	+54	2550	1687
Smurfit Kappa	2933	+13	4495	2558
General Retailers				
ASOS.	292½	+7½	436½	218½
Auto Trader	584¾#	+9½	908½	571¾
B&M Europ Value Ret	165		364½	155¼
Caffyns.	425#		500	415
Dixons Carphone	126¼#	-½	146	82
Dunelm	1123	+6	1232	858½
Frasers Group	684½	+14½	770	546
Halfords Group	142¼#	+2½	174½	116¼
Headlam Group.	44¾	-2	142½	44¾
Howden Joinery	836	-3	914½	679½
Inchcape	769	-½	808	638
JD Sports	87½	+1¾	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	319¼	+2¾	320½	228¼
Next.	13590#	+55	14580	9028
Pets At Home	194½#	-¾	273¼	191¼
RM Group.	114		118	82
Topps Tiles	42¼#	-1½	50	29
WH Smith	620½	-18½	1307	613½
Health Care Equipment & Services				
Convatec Group	240¾	+1¼	295½	219¼
Flying Brands	+¾		2	+½
Smith & Nephew	1228	+10½	1435	937¾
Household Goods & Home Construction				
Barratt Development	383¼	+4¼	482¼	350
Bellway	2776#	+36	2982	2166
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3980	+48	4324	3462
Bovis Homes	666½	+24¼	698	510¾
Mcbride.	141¾	-4¼	159	99¼
Persimmon	1360	+½	1405	1037½
Reckitt Benckiser	5988	+6	6080	4633
Taylor Wimpey	108	+¾	123¼	93
Industrial Engineering				
Bodycote	722½	+12½	725½	460½
Hill & Smith	2220#	+65	2265	1530
IMI	2524	+24	2528	1606
Morgan Crucible.	222½	+½	274	177½
Northgate	383#	+3	395	273½
Rotork	328	+2½	352	275¾
Spirax-Sarco	6855	+15	8190	5445
Vesuvius	400½	+¾	421	313¾
Weir Group	2922	+50	2990	1984
Xaar.	104	+2	145	59
Industrial Metals & Mining				
Castings.	274#	-2	319	234
Evraz				
Ferrexpo	72½	-½	110¾	44¼
Industrial Transportation				
Braemar Shipping Serv	225½#	+6	278	201
Clarkson	3870	+85	4505	2995
FirstGroup	189	+¼	233	146½
Fisher (J) & Sons	368		403	285
Leisure Goods				
Games Workshop.	18520#	+80	19840	12410
Photo-Me Intl.	149¼	+3	230	144½
Life Insurance				
Aviva.	687	+3½	692½	468¾
Chesnara.	299		301½	212¾
Legal & General	265½	+3	265½	215¼
Phoenix Group	746	+3	749½	479½
Prudential	1178½	+23½	1186¼	595¼
Media				
4imprint Group	3910	+140	6030	3035
Bloomsbury Publish.	474½	+1	672	465
Future.	522	+5	1029	511½
Informa	884½	+10½	993½	640¼
ITV	80½	+¼	87¾	66¼
Pearson	1040	+20½	1379	984½
Reach	54¼	-¾	88¼	53
STV Group	106	-2½	218	103
Wilmington Group.	294	-18	389	289½
WPP Group	339½	+2	814	269
Mining				
Anglo American	3142	+102	3157¼	2003¾
Anglo Pacific	115¾	+3½	116¼	50
Antofagasta.	3459	+203	3459	1383
BHP Billiton	2324	+56	2335	1609½
Endeavour Mining	3872	+222	3986	1460
Fresnillo.	3496	+144	3568	644
Gem Diamonds	3		12	2¾
Glencore	419¼	+10½	422½	230
Hochschild Mining.	513½	+24	530	168
Kenmare Res.	257	+7	436	227
Petra Diamonds	17¼	-½	30½	10½
Rio Tinto	6091	+105	6131	4117
Mobile Telecommunications				
Vodafone Group	99¾#	+½	101	64
Nonequity Investment Instruments				
Oryx Int.Gwth.	1252½	-10	1392½	1042½
Rights &Iss.Inc	2040		2360	1670
Nonlife Insurance				
Admiral Group.				
Beazley Group	815½	-1½	973	769
Hiscox.	1402	+4	1429	1035
Lancashire	617		694	523
Oil & Gas Producers				
BP.	435¼	-2¾	476¼	331¾
Cairn Energy	195	+10	331½	183
Enquest.	10½	-½	16½	9¾
Gulf Keystone Pet.	171¼	-4¼	224½	148¾
Harbour Energy.	197¼	-2¼	294	151¼
Shell	2738	-21½	2931½	2291½
Soco International	20½#	+½	27½	18
Tullow Oil	6½	+¼	24½	4
Oil Equipment, Services & Distribution				
Hunting.	385½	+12	396	246½
John Wood Group	24		72½	17¼
Personal Goods				
Burberry Group	1300	-16½	1371½	627¾
PZ Cussons	71	-1¼	88¼	66
Unilever.	4699	-123½	6177½	4658½
Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology				
AstraZeneca	13384	-208	14148	9667
Genus.	2525	-20	2715	1424
GlaxoSmithKline	1820½#	-11	1848½	1264
Haleon	372¼	+2¼	415¼	326½
Hikma.	1527	+4	2340	1495
Ovoca Gold	1¼			
Oxford Biomedica	663	+8	682	232½
Real Estate Investment & Services				
Boot (Henry)	216	-6	237	196
Cardiff Property.	2700		2700	2450
CLS Holdings	60	-½	80½	53½
Foxtons	58	+¼	68¼	52¼
Harworth Group.	165		189½	158½
Mountview Est.	9150		10200	8700
Panther Secs.	285		320	280
Rightmove.	514¾	+2½	823¾	500
Savills	1002	+19	1110	871
Wynnstay Props.	875	+5	900	680
Real Estate Investment Trusts				
Big Yellow Group	1018#	+6	1180	848
British Land.	405#	+7½	420½	321¼
Capital & Counties	143½	+½	161¼	113½
Derwent London	1747	+12	2096	1608
Grainger	180½	-½	228	176½
Great Portland Est.	315#	+½	363	262
Hammerson	330¼	+3½	331¾	220½
Helical Bar	187¼#	+¼	240	171¾
Land Securities	624½#	+5	650	499½
London & Stamford Prop	189¼#	+½	204½	170½
Primary Health.	98		103½	86¼
SEGRO	716¼	+3½	732¼	599
Town Centre	126#	+1½	149	117
Unite Group	555	+5	879½	510
Value & Income	199¾#	+1¾	215	173
Workspace Group	398	+4	495	362
Software & Computer Services				
Computacenter	3026	+106	3064	2024
Intec Telecom.				
Microgen	294		344	255
Moneysupermarket	185½	+4¼	221½	180½
Pendragon.	357½	+6	558	296
RELX	3090	+107	4135	2972
Sage Group	1063½	+13½	1348	1038½
Triad Group	245	-15	400	240
Support Services				
Ashtead Group	5326	+226	5538	3659
Capita Group	403	-½	410	175
DCC.	4424	-120	5600	4404
Diploma	5390	+95	5650	3624
Essentra.	96		130½	89¾
Experian Group	3427	+95	4088	3091
Ferguson.	16790#	+240	19470	11670
Hays	54¾		88¼	52
Intertek Group.	4606	+52	5385	4064
Johnson Service	133¼	+½	159½	122¾
London Security.	2850	+100	3800	2750
Macfarlane Group	72		120½	62¾
Mears Group.	359	+5	417½	311½
Michael Page	235	+1½	341½	219½
Mitie Group.	166	+1	169¼	106½
Norish.	18½		18¾	14
Paypoint	469½	+9½	853	438½
Rentokil Initial	445	+1½	448½	309½
Robert Walters.	143½	+3½	329	116
RS Group.	635½	+14½	684	487¼
Serco Group	277¾	+3½	279½	147
SIG.	9¾	-½	18	8½
Smiths News.	77½		79½	47½
Speedy Hire.	24½#	-½	32¼	18
SThree	184	-1	293	137½
Travis Perkins	634½	-2	714	494
Trifast	68	-2	87½	59
Vitec Group	12¾	+1¾	149	11
Technology Hardware & Equipment				
BATM Advanced	16¼	+¼	19¾	13
Tobacco				
British Amer.Tob	4067#	-122	4421	2905
Imperial Brands	3047	-78	3312	2579
Travel & Leisure				
888 Holdings	22¼	+¼	74	21
Carnival	2285	+11	2358	1134
Celtic.	199		204	142½
Compass Group	2316	-18	2843	2286
Domino's Pizza.	172½	-¾	310	167¼
EasyJet.	515	+1¼	587¾	427½
Entain.	777¾	+6½	1022	501¼
Flutter Entert.	16435	+315	23630	14670
Fuller Smith & Turner	716		726	508
Heavitree	220		280	200
InterContinental Htl	10029¼	-207	10454½	5489
Intl Consolidated Airlines	425	+5	427½	224½
Irish Continental Uts.	532½	-2½	560	380
Marston's	63	+2½	63¼	33¼
Mitchells & Butlers	267½	+3	291½	208½
National Express	23	+¾	80½	21
Rank Group.	96	-1	160½	77¾
Saga	383½	-3½	397	111½
Wetherspoon (JD)	752	+9	804	541
Whitbread	2500	-37	3274	2335
AIM				
Alumasc Group	259		395	232
Arbuthnot Banking	877½	-10	1100	837½
Boohoo	23¾	+¾	32½	10½
Camellia	5050	+70	6050	4090
Churchill China	336	+1	725	330
CML Microsystems.	285	-10	335	210
Colefax Group	960		978	750
CPP Group.	74½	+½	162	68½
Cropper (James)	395	-3	410	132½
Falkland Islands.	240		316¾	162½
Fevertree Drinks	803	-2	998	611½
Filtronic	179	-2	182	75
James Halstead	134	-3	181½	133
Mothercare	2¼		4¼	2¼
Mpac Group	310		586	270
Naked Wine.	73¾	+1¼	93½	43
Nichols.	932	-2	1465	930
Northamber	32½		34	26
Portmeirion.	94		189	93
Regal Petroleum	16½	-½	26½	14½
Rockhopper Exploratn	71½	-½	87¾	27½
Ten Alps	47½		73	47½
Titon Holdings	92½		95	69
Volex.	425#	+12	428½	198¾
Young & Co Brewery A.	741	-7	992	714

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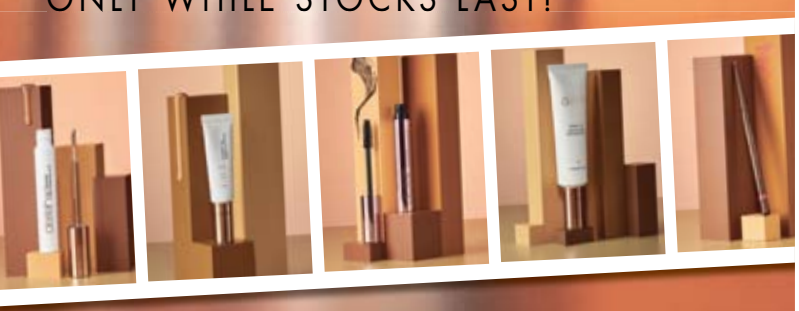

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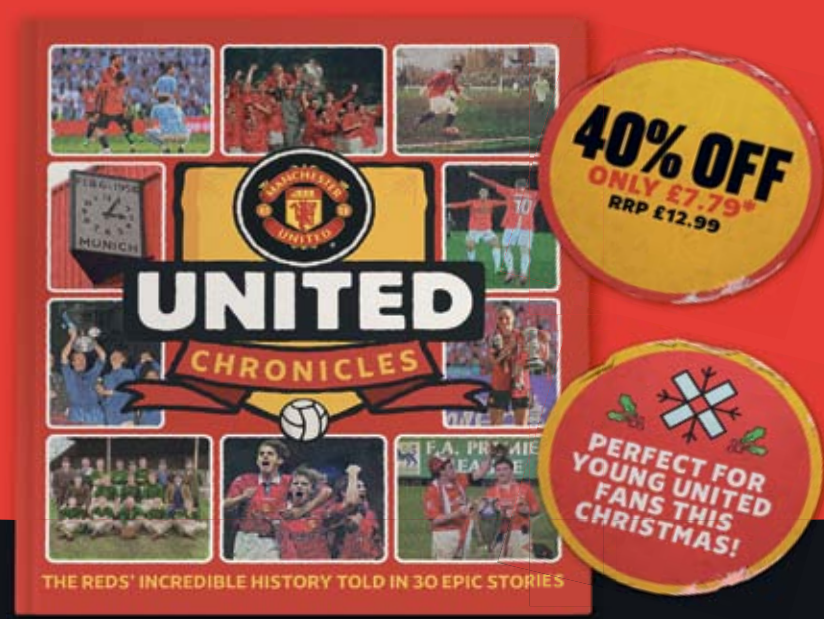

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Letters

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It's time for families to look after elderly relatives

I CAN only imagine how shocked my parents would have been to read of 3.5 million people being denied care, with 900,000 having their requests turned down resulting in 6,200 dying.

In pre and post-war Britain, care for elderly and disabled parents and children was a family responsibility, with care homes unknown for working people.

Families would decide who would assume the care of elderly parents by either moving into and assuming ownership of their homes, or by taking them into theirs.

Most migrant communities still do this – the thought of it not being their responsibility would be unconscionable.

Roy Daniels,
Kingsclere, Hants

Migrants waited on hand and foot as pensioners die

A CRISIS in social care meant more than 6,000 died as they waited to hear if they would be given urgently needed help.

No such problems for more than 41,000 migrants crossing the Channel in small boats in the last year. They immediately received all urgently needed help and beyond, beginning with being safely brought ashore by the UK Border Force patrol.

Sir Keir Starmer would do well to remember charity begins at home.

Dave Bonwick,
Portslade, W Sussex

Trump did world a favour with Nicolas Maduro arrest

NICOLAS Maduro was not elected to be president of Venezuela in the presidential election – and the winner was forced to leave the country ("Moscow and Beijing's fury at "forcible removal" of Maduro", January 5).

That and his control of drug gangs and illegal trading of oil to China, Iran and Russia should have resulted in an international arrest warrant. Donald Trump simply did what was right in common justice and arrested Maduro without it.

The UK and Europe have no business interfering or voicing condemnation. Let's face it, how did Europe think their empires succeeded in past centuries?

Warren Browning,
Rugby, Warks

Could Donald send troops to seize Keir next please?

SO PRESIDENT Maduro has run his county into the ground? Well, Keir Starmer is doing the same here in the UK. Perhaps Donald Trump could send Delta Force to remove him from our country (I feel sure SAS would be willing to assist). Then we could call a general election and get our country back on track.

Anne Rogers,
Grimsby, Lincs

Millions of Britons would support Keir's abduction

I'M NO fan of Donald Trump, but his stock would rise considerably in my eyes if he would consider abducting a certain political leader from over this side of the pond.

This so-called leader rides roughshod over his countrymen, is driving millions into penury and ruin, appears to support illegal migration and uses the legal system to suit his own ends.

It would appear Trump had a lot of assistance from the Venezuelan community. If he decided Keir Starmer was to be his next target, there would be millions here who would willingly support him.

Brian Banks,
Ormskirk, Lancs

US smash-and-grab policy sets dangerous precedent

THE shocking news that under the guise of drug cartels, Donald Trump has attacked and invaded Venezuela. It was only last week he announced he was "taking back" American oil.

Since when do the assets of an independent country belong to the United States? When the president is hand-in-glove with American oil companies.

Must Britain and the European allies of America now have to stand up against his threats of annexing Canada and Greenland?

Peter Morgan,
Shrewsbury, Salop

LETTER OF THE DAY

HEAVY PRICE: Pay now or pay big later for social care

Daily Express leads way on care crusade

WELL done to the Daily Express for featuring on the front page the extremely timely and under-reported issue of social care ("Get a grip on social care crisis", January 3).

Four years ago I applauded the Tory Government for introducing the Health and Social Care Levy Bill. It is only common sense that paying the levy is better than having to pay hundreds of thousands if one has the misfortune to need social care later in life.

I have met workers in social care who tell me how they have to make Solomon-type decisions with scant resources. They wanted that levy. It should have been retained. Far better to pay it than have to fork out for major bills later down the road.

John Barstow,
Pulborough, W Sussex

Venezuelan drug cartels welcomed with open arms

SINCE Venezuela is full of extreme left-wing, drug-running gangsters, perhaps we could give them all asylum here.

We are currently building 1-to-1.5million new council houses, on soon to be empty farmland, for illegal migrants. So many four-star hotels that housed them will soon be empty.

If Keir Starmer wants to destroy what's left of our country, then these people will fit in nicely.

Simon James,
Willenhall, Staffs

2,000 extra magistrates will just paper over cracks

DAVID Lammy needs to do far more than appoint a few more magistrates as our justice system is in chaos ("Lammy bids to recruit 2,000 magistrates to speed justice", January 3).

Labour says this is the fault of the last Conservative Government, well, partly at least. The last Government closed a number of courts to save money. All those magistrates, ushers and court clerks will need appointing along with finding suitable premises.

Lammy wants to limit trial by jury but I do not agree a judge alone should decide a case. Judges are a little too left-wing and removed from the reality of everyday life.

Restricting the right to trial by jury will save money and be more likely to achieve the correct result.

We also need to restrict access to legal aid, a well-intentioned idea hijacked by career criminals in an effort to stay out of prison.

Dick Bedford,
Cullompton, Devon

Begum knew what she was doing, never let her return

I TAKE offence at your correspondent's comments concerning Shamima Begum (Letters, January 2). Yes, we were all adolescents once, but we didn't go off and join murderous groups and were unfazed by seeing a severed head in a bin.

Left-wing, bleeding-heart liberals will tell you this girl was too young to know her own mind, and yet these are the same people who in 2018 were championing and lauding the then 15-year-old Greta Thunberg as an apparently grown-up and intelligent adult.

Begum should never be let back into our country

Steve Collard,
Beckenham, Gtr London

THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER YEAR OF EXPRESS EXCELLENCE

A VERY happy new year to all and a huge thanks to the Daily Express for giving us another fabulous 12 months.

We must all continue to bow to President Trump and avoid offending Vladimir Putin – just in case either decides to have a slice of England.

We can rest assured our strong and forthright Prime Minister will bow and scrape on our behalf ("Labour tears itself apart as Maduro-apologists declare war on lame duck Starmer", January 5). This year, let's "do a Trump" and remove him from power.

Gilly Radcliffe,
Hook, Hants

TODAY: Tuesday January 6, 2026

ON THIS DAY

45 years ago (1981)
We revealed Peter Sutcliffe had appeared at court in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, charged with the murder of student Jacqueline Hill, 20, in Leeds. The lorry driver had been questioned by detectives leading the five-year inquiry into the Yorkshire Ripper, who had murdered 13 women.

Sutcliffe confessed to the murders and was convicted on May 22, 1981.

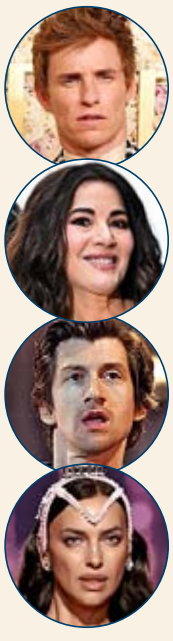
He died in prison custody in 2020.

85 years ago (1941)
Against the backdrop of a world at war, US President Franklin D Roosevelt delivered his Four Freedoms State of the Union address, which proposed the four fundamental freedoms that people everywhere ought to enjoy – including: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

32 years ago (1994)
US national figure skating Nancy Kerrigan was attacked by an assailant wielding a police baton, forcing her to withdraw from the competition.

It later emerged that the attacker was hired by the former husband of her rival, Tonya Harding.

BIRTHDAYS



The Theory Of Everything star **Eddie Redmayne** is 44. He was classmates with Prince William. TV chef **Nigella Lawson** is 66. Her mother taught her to cook. Arctic Monkeys singer **Alex Turner** is 40. He is worth £22million. Russian model **Irina Shayk** is 40. She previously dated Cristiano Ronaldo.

TODAY'S GIGGLE
Have you ever tried to eat a clock? It's very time consuming.

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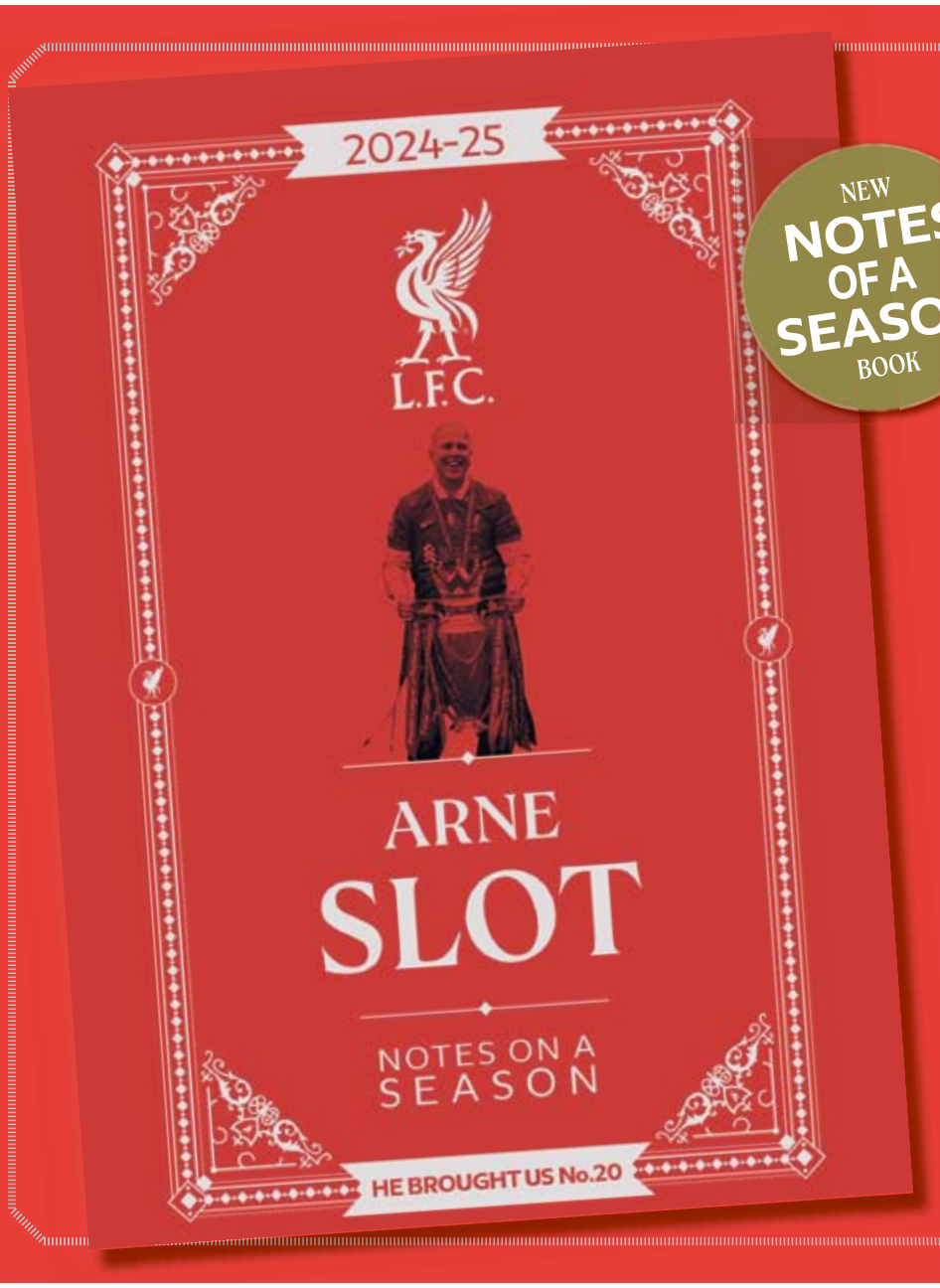
Trustpilot



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Racing

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Midnight to score quick-fire double

By **The Scout**

MIDNIGHT CALL (2.15, Nap) is fancied to double up in quick time at Wolverhampton by taking division one of the Make The Move To Midnite Classified Stakes.

Tony Carroll's, right, mare scored more snugly than the margin suggested four days ago, with 7lb claimer Matthew Slater steering.

My selection has again bagged a handy draw and is likely to get a smoother run through this 6f event than grey rival Secret Road, who finished strongly from off the pace at Southwell recently. FOOLS RUSH IN (5.15, trb) showed more in a reapplied tongue tie on his latest start and the handicapper has cut him some slack.

At Southwell, ELUSIVE BUTTERFLY (7.30, nb) has her sights lowered for the Best Odds Guaranteed At BetMGM Restricted Maiden Fillies' Stakes.

Invincible Army's daughter raced at Listed level in the summer and should be too good for her six all-weather opponents.

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WIND UP AGAINST IT

Doubt over Supreme Hurdle bid

By **Melissa Jones**

DAVID PIPE says it will be a "race against time" for potential superstar Windbeneathmywings to make the Cheltenham Festival.

The chestnut gelding burst on to the British scene when he scooted in by 14 lengths in a Listed bumper event at Ascot in December 2024.

A setback ruled him out of the Champion Bumper at Prestbury Park's signature event and another hold-up has kept him off the track since.

Pipe, right, whose father Martin scooped the Supreme Novices' Hurdle with Sondrio (1989) and Hors La Loi III (1999), has been aiming for the meeting's traditional curtain-raiser on March 10.

Windbeneathmywings was a 14-1 chance with bookmakers in ante-post lists, but he has been pushed out to 25-1 with just over two months to go.

"He's cantering and on the way back," Pipe said about his Professor Caroline Tisdall and Geoff Thompson-owned charge.

"But I'm not in any rush with him. I'm hoping he can run over hurdles February time. If we end up missing Cheltenham, there is Aintree and Punchestown to consider.

"He did school earlier on in the year and he was good."

The five horses immediately behind Windbeneathmywings at the Berkshire venue have scored over flights since, as have three others from the 14-runner field.

He joined Pipe after making three appearances in bumpers for Patrick J Flynn in Ireland, winning two of them under amateur rider David Doyle.

WING AND A PRAYER
Windbeneath-mywings has suffered setbacks leading up to his Cheltenham target

SOUTHWELL SKYSPORTSRACING

4.30 MIDNIGHT BETTING APP HANDICAP
£3,716 (Class 5) 4f 214yds (10 declared)

1 (9) 764053- ● **CASTAN (32) (C&D,F)** B Smart 6 9-9 ..... **P Mulrennan** 82
2 (8) 61L083- **GLORY FIGHTER (19) (D)** P Midgley 10 9-7 ..... **M Winn** 73
3 (5) 583547- **BRAZILIAN BELLE (32) (D)** M Dods 4 9-5 ..... **J Hart** ★85
4 (1) 626304- **THANKUAPPRECIATE (19) (C&D)** D Carroll 6 9-4 ..... **Z Wheatley(3)** 81
5 (4) 548190- **HAVECHATMA (25) (C&D)** D Ivory 6 9-3 ..... **L Morris** 79
6 (10) 608608- **WINCHURCH (19) (C&D)** M Appleby 4 9-2 ..... **R Havlin** 80
7 (7) 634334- **INSUSPENSE (29)** Oliver Cole 4 8-13 ..... **P J McDonald** 80
8 (3) 913562- **POPULAR DREAM (19) (C&D)** D Shaw 6 8-12 ..... **Joanna Mason** 81
9 (2) 1L0786- **MERSEA (11) (C&D)** G Tuer 6 8-12 ..... **D Keenan** 73
10 (6) L/47851- **JEANS MAITE (224) (C&D)** S Bowring 10 8-11 ..... **L Edmunds** 83

BLINKERS: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 3 Castan, 4 Jeans Maite, Popular Dream, 13-2 Insuspense, 10 Winchurch, 12 Thankuappreciate, Havechatma, 14 Brazilian Belle, 16 Others.

5.00 MIDNITE CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 1)
£3,140 (6) 1m 3f 23yds (12)

1 (3) 061630- **CELEBRATING ETHEL (87)** A Carroll 7 9-9 ..... **Myla Coppins(7)** 59
2 (6) 043704- **CLOUD FREE (43)** F Murtagh 5 9-9 ..... **P Mulrennan** 50
3 (11) 4R3678- **DESIDERATA (11)** T Faulkner 6 9-9 ..... **R Havlin** 59
4 (2) 590L- **DESTINATION UNKOWN (J11)** M Chapman 5 9-9 ..... **A Brookes(3)** ★65
5 (12) 2348L8- **KHANGAI (18) (C)** T Coyle & K Wood 6 9-9 ..... **H Russell** 48
6 (1) 34252-3 **KNIGHT OF MAGIC (2) (F)** James Owen 7 9-9 ..... **L Morris** 57
7 (9) 0794L5- ● **LADY DELILA (35) (T)** I Jardine 6 9-9 ..... **A Mullen** 51
8 (7) L99L08- **LAWMANS BLIS (15)** S A Harris 8 9-9 ..... **L Edmunds** 49
9 (5) 332377- **STINTINO SUNSET (41) (D)** J & S Birkett 6 9-9 ..... **D E Hogan** 60
10 (8) L29902- **GOOD SHOT (43) (F)** A Balding 4 9-7 ..... **Charlie Tucker(7)** 56
11 (4) 8466L8- **SHARP CALL (21)** M & D Easterby 4 9-7 ..... **Joanna Mason** 43
12 (10) L6L- **WADACRE MORIARTY (21)** C Johnston 4 9-7 ..... **C Shepherd** 46

CHEEK PIECES: No. 5 HOOD: Nos. 6, 7, 9, 10.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Knight Of Magic, 5 Good Shot, 11-2 Celebrating Ethel, 6 Stintino Sunset, 8 Lady Delila, 12 Desiderata, Cloud Free, 14 Others.

5.30 MIDNITE CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 2)
£3,140 (6) 1m 3f 23yds (12)

1 (9) L50698- **CIARA STORM (18)** S Dixon 6 9-9 ..... **Doubtful**
2 (4) 32737/4- **COME TO PASS (20)** A Carroll 7 9-9 ..... **Jason Watson** 46
3 (5) 62212 7- **FOINIX (20)** J & S Best 6 9-9 ..... **D E Hogan** ★62
4 (10) 25/5268- **HIJO DE LA LUNA (J200) (F)** S G West 6 9-9 ..... **P Mulrennan** 57
5 (11) L5940-L **MUHIB (2)** Olly Williams 5 9-9 ..... **Doubtful**
6 (8) 83454-5 **RAMPANT (2)** P Morris 6 9-9 ..... **J Nicholls(5)** 55
7 (1) 231657- **THE PUG (36) (C&D)** M Hammond 6 9-9 ..... **A Brookes(3)** 57
8 (7) L9D709- **BROADSTONE (9)** J Norton 4 9-7 ..... **M Winn** 60
9 (6) L86354- **HIGHFIELD COMRADE (74)** J & S Quinn 4 9-7 ..... **J Hart** 55
10 (2) 344576- ● **IGNITION (74)** T Faulkner 4 9-7 ..... **R Havlin** 55
11 (12) 556345- **JACK ANDREA (133)** Darryll Holland 4 9-7 ..... **S D Bowen** 56
12 (3) 566665- **WEST WICKHAM (172)** Jessica Macey 4 9-7 ..... **L Edmunds** 59

BLINKERS: No. 3 VISOR: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 8, 11.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Come To Pass, 9-2 Highfield Comrade, Foinix, 6 Ignition, 8 Jack Andrea, 10 West Wickham, The Pug, 14 Broadstone, Rampant, 16 Others.

THE SCOUT

4.30 Castan
5.00 Lady Delila
5.30 Ignition
6.00 Selenic
6.30 R P Mcmurphy
7.00 Brinton
7.30 ELLUSIVE BUTTERFLY (nb)
8.00 Dartrey
8.30 I Need Your Love

6.00 BETMGM.CO.UK FILLIES' HANDICAP
£3,716 (5) 1m 3f 23yds (8)

1 (1) 405813- **CARAMAY (15) (C&D)** W Muir & C Grassick 6 9-12 ..... **L Edmunds** 76
2 (7) 53/414L- **THANKYOU BARONESS (111)** Mrs I G-Leveque 5 9-12 ..... **P-L Jamin** 76
3 (2) 83L67-L **ALPINE OASIS (4) (C)** Darryll Holland 5 9-11 ..... **D Keenan** 78
4 (3) 4/41L03- **LILLY LUX (42)** G Baker 5 9-9 ..... **J Mitchell** 69
5 (5) 21- ● **SELENIC (335) (F)** Sir M Prescott 4 9-9 ..... **L Morris** 72
6 (4) 743214- **ROMANTIC SPIRIT (34) (C&D)** D Menuisier 4 9-7 ..... **R Havlin** 76
7 (8) 6L2152- **LIVE EACH DAY (33) (C)** S C Williams 4 9-5 ..... **J Hart** 76
8 (6) 28123L- **LITTLE MISS INDIA (36) (C&D)** James Owen 5 9-4 ..... **Jason Watson** ★79

SP FORECAST: 11-8 Selenic, 9-2 Caramay, 6 Romantic Spirit, Live Each Day, 13-2 Little Miss India, 16 Thankyou Baroness, 20 Lilly Lux, Alpine Oasis.

6.30 BETMGM HANDICAP (DIV 1)
£4,711 (6) 1m 13yds (10)

1 (8) L33133- ● **R P MCMURPHY (10)** M Appleby 4 9-9 ..... **E Greatrex** 66
2 (9) 364055- **THE SPOTLIGHT KID (27) (D)** D Ivory 7 9-8 ..... **L Morris** 65
3 (5) 73L7/91- **SHOWMEDEMONEY (21) (D) (T)** I Jardine 7 9-8 ..... **A Mullen** 65
4 (1) 452263- **BACK FROM DUBAI (11) (C&D)** S Bowring 9 9-7 ..... **L Edmunds** 64
5 (4) 747721- **CHARLATAN (10) (C&D,F)** D M Simcock 6 9-7 ..... **C Shepherd** 65
6 (7) 8880- **PRIDE EYE (21)** M Rimell 4 9-6 ..... **P Mulrennan** ★68
7 (6) 611446- **RING OF GOLD (18)** M & D Easterby 9 9-5 ..... **Joanna Mason** 64
8 (2) 383456- **SPACE RAIDER (21)** I Furtado 4 9-4 ..... **J Hart** 64
9 (3) 217849- **MASHAM MOOR (47) (C&D)** S G West 9 9-0 ..... **A Brookes(3)** 61
10 (10) 376508- **MICKEY MONGOOSE (18) (C&D)** Olly Williams 6 9-0 ..... **D Fentiman** 57

SP FORECAST: 15-8 R P Mcmurphy, 9-2 Charlatan, 11-2 Showmedemoney, 13-2 Back From Dubai, 8 The Spotlight Kid, 12 Space Raider, Ring Of Gold, 20 Others.

7.00 BETMGM HANDICAP (DIV 2)
£4,711 (6) 1m 13yds (9)

1 (7) 610366- **AMARACHI (15) (F)** J Parr 4 9-9 ..... **J Mitchell** 63
2 (2) 046/66- **SHOWSTORM (17)** K R Burke 4 9-9 ..... **P-L Jamin** 58
3 (9) 1261 5L- ● **BRINTON (194) (C&D,F)** J Portman 5 9-9 ..... **O Tubb(5)** 62
4 (3) 24L1L5- **KESSAAR POWER (75) (D)** P McEntee 6 9-8 ..... **J Hart** 62
5 (5) 326U2-3 **IMOLA (3)** Joey Ramsden 5 9-7 ..... **L Edmunds** ★65
6 (4) 6/7LL-06 **SUMMER EVENING (2)** D Flood 4 9-7 ..... **W Fentiman(5)** 58
7 (8) 049413- **POKE THE BEAR (20) (D)** Hayley Burton 4 9-6 ..... **L Morris** 64
8 (1) 80L8L7- **PAVE THE WAY (28)** M Rimell 4 9-3 ..... **P Mulrennan** 62
9 (6) 663306- **SAVED LIZZIE (19)** Darryll Holland 6 9-0 ..... **D Keenan** 63

SP FORECAST: 2 Imola, 10-3 Showstorm, 13-2 Poke The Bear, 8 Kessaar Power, Brinton, Amarachi, 12 Saved Lizzie, 20 Pave The Way, 25 Summer Evening.

7.30 BETMGM RESTRICTED MAIDEN FILLIES' STAKES
£4,320 (5) 7f 14yds (7)

1 (5) **MAC'S WEE SISTER (T)** I Jardine 4 10-2 ..... **A Mullen** –
2 (3) L- **TROUBLE IN CHICAGO (197)** I Furtado 4 10-0 ..... **Elle-May Croot(5)** 16
3 (7) 43- ● **ELLUSIVE BUTTERFLY (184) (F)** K R Burke 3 8-12 ..... **P-L Jamin** ★75
4 (2) **SEAPEARL (F)** Oliver Cole 3 8-12 ..... **J Hart** –
5 (1) 9- **BLUE CELESTIAL (68)** J Tate 3 8-10 ..... **C Shepherd** 26
6 (4) 22- **SEEING STARS (7)** W Knight 3 8-10 ..... **L Morris** 63
7 (6) **STAR SUEPREME** Lemos Souza 3 8-10 ..... **L Edmunds** –

SP FORECAST: 4-5 Ellusive Butterfly, 13-8 Seeing Stars, 8 Seapearl, 25 Mac's Wee Sister, 33 Blue Celestial, Star Suepreme, 100 Trouble In Chicago.

8.00 ALWAYS GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY HANDICAP 3YO
£3,716 (5) 6f 16yds (8)

1 (7) L40133- **FLASH RASCAL (19) (D)** Dr R Newland & J Insole 9-9 ..... **P Mulrennan** 73
2 (3) 14L4- **SPACE BEAR (29)** M Botti 9-9 ..... **L Morris** 72
3 (4) 22L455- **COUNTRY ARTISTE (96)** Craig Lidster 9-9 ..... **P J McDonald** 72
4 (1) 653- **BERLINETTA (140) (F)** W Haggas 9-8 ..... **J Hart** 69
5 (2) 222- **SHE'S DIVINE (11)** M Loughnane 9-8 ..... **J Mitchell** 71
6 (5) 332L- **NALA'S DREAM (47)** R Fahey 9-7 ..... **W Fentiman(5)** 74
7 (6) LL0-11 ● **DARTREY (3) (C&D)** R Beckett 9-7(12ex) ..... **E Greatrex** ★75
8 (8) 30644- **MYSTICAL LAND (21)** M Dods 8-12 ..... **M Winn** 71

SP FORECAST: 5-6 Dartrey, 11-2 She's Divine, Berlinetta, 10 Nala's Dream, 12 Flash Rascal, 14 Space Bear, 20 Mystical Land, 25 Country Artiste.

8.30 BET BUILDERS AT MIDNITE HANDICAP
£3,716 (5) 6f 16yds (10)

1 (9) L/57186- **LOVAT SCOUT (32) (C,D)** K R Burke 4 9-9 ..... **J Nicholls(5)** 80
2 (8) 0/48607- **PHOENIX OF DREAMS (18) (D)** J & S Quinn 5 9-7 ..... **J Hart** 77
3 (5) 415646- **BLACKJACK (18) (C&D)** A Brown 9 9-7 ..... **P J McDonald** 78
4 (4) 081249- **MASSIMO BLUE (39) (C&D)** G Baker 4 9-6 ..... **Doubtful**
5 (3) 092153- ● **I NEED YOUR LOVE (18) (D,F)** M & D Easterby 4 9-6 ..... **B Garritty** 78
6 (6) 512103- **HOLBACHE (77) (D)** J Camacho 8 9-5 ..... **T Kiely-Marshall(5)** 79
7 (7) 4L8564- **CAMERA SHY (19) (D)** M Dods 4 9-3 ..... **P Mulrennan** ★81
8 (1) 016600- **SATURN SEVEN (39) (D)** R Burdon 6 9-3 ..... **A Egan(7)** 78
9 (10) 5479L4- **SHOWTIME MAHOMES (19) (C&D)** G Tuer 7 9-2 ..... **O Stammers** 75
10 (2) LL9136- **NO KNEE NEVER (10) (D)** James Owen 5 9-1 ..... **L Morris** 78

SP FORECAST: 3 I Need Your Love, 9-2 Camera Shy, Lovat Scout, 13-2 No Knee Never, Showtime Mahomes, 10 Holbache, 12 Others.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Jason Hart 13% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** M Appleby 10% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 6.30 R P Mcmurphy (cheek pieces), 7.00 Showstorm (visor). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 4.30 Castan(hcp). 7.00 Imola(hcp), Showstorm(hcp). 7.30 Seeing Stars. 8.00 Flash Rascal, Nala's Dream. **DRAW:** No advantage. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Lady Delila** (5.00), **Showmedemoney** (6.30), **Mac's Wee Sister** (7.30) 218 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 5.00 **Destination Unkown** from G Tuer to M Chapman. 5.30 **Jack Andrea** from R Eddery to Darryll Holland. 7.30 **Blue Celestial** from Alice Haynes to J Tate. 8.00 **Country Artiste** from C Cox to Craig Lidster.

ITV cards threat from frost

By **Jon Lees**

THE fate of Saturday's ITV jumps programme is reliant on a rise in temperatures as snow and frost wiped out racing in Britain yesterday.

Even Wolverhampton's all-weather fixture fell victim to a cold snap which so far has claimed every jumps meeting since Saturday. Officials hope a thaw can ensure today's meeting goes ahead after an 8am inspection in a schedule which also includes all-weather racing from Southwell. Thursday's meeting at Taunton and a fixture at Ffos Las, added at short notice yesterday by the BHA, offer the first chance of a return to jumps action, with no problems reported.

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) K P De Foy 75% (1 wins and 2 places from 4 runners), B Smart 60% (2/1/5), D M Simcock 58% (4/3/12), Ewan Whillans 57% (1/3/7), M Botti 56% (4/1/9), D O'Meara 53% (1/8/17), A Balding 50% (2/3/10), A Carroll 50% (8/12/40), E Walker 50% (3/2/10).
IN-FORM JOCKEYS Myla Coppins 75% (1 wins and 2 places from 4 runners), P J McDonald 67% (1/3/6), David Nolan 62% (4/6/16), Gina Mangan 50% (3/1/8), Mohammed Tabti 50% (2/0/4), Pierre Jamin 50% (1/3/8), Rowan Scott 50% (2/4/12), Sean Levey 50% (1/6/14), Taryn Langley 50% (2/0/4).

GALLOP GOSSIP

Lambourn: CARAMAY
(6.00 Southwell)
Newmarket: MAGIC STONE
(3.15 Wolverhampton)
North: FOOLS RUSH IN
(5.15 Wolverhampton)
South: DARTREY
(8.00 Southwell)

WOLVERHAMPTON SSR (8AM INSP.)

THE SCOUT

1.15 My Champion
1.45 Sovereign Wealth
2.15 MIDNIGHT CALL (nap)
2.45 Genius Mistake
3.15 Magic Stone
3.45 Echalar
4.15 Circuit Breaker
4.45 First Greyed
5.15 FOOLS RUSH IN

1.15 MEG NICHOLLS' BLOG AT BETMGM.CO.UK HANDICAP 3YO
£3,140 (Class 6) 1m 142yds (8 declared)

1	(7)	L65-1	ANEIRIN'S SWORD (4) J Osborne 9-10(6ex)	S Osborne	62
2	(2)	577613-	SNAAFY (7) (C&D) D Loughnane 9-9	R Scott	69
3	(8)	51-	ROSERUNNER (20) M Botti 9-8	M Ghiani	68
4	(3)	5952-	● MY CHAMPION (60) E Bethell 9-7	C Rodriguez	67
5	(6)	5L81-	ALFA PATISSERIE (50) I Furtado 9-7	S M Levey	68
6	(5)	632312-	POPTY PING (8) D O'Meara 9-6	D Nolan	67
7	(4)	L60-	KARISMA'S ANGEL (18) E Walker 9-4	C Fallon★70	
8	(1)	L46233-	KING VICTORIOUS (18) (F) G Boughey 9-3	P Cosgrave	68

VISOR: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 8.

SP FORECAST: 4 Aneirin's Sword, 9-2 Alfa Patisserie, 5 Snaafy, 11-2 Roserunner, My Champion, 6 Popty Ping, 15-2 King Victorious, 16 Karisma's Angel.

1.45 BEST ODDS GUARANTEED AT BETMGM NOVICE STAKES
£6,480 (3) 1m 142yds (7)

1	(5)	08-	WINGSTAR (49) S England 4 9-11	G Wood	41
2	(1)	96-	CONTEMPLATION (19) J Ferguson 3 8-9	Harry Vigors(7)	44
3	(3)	0-	HUNTERIAN (29) C Johnston 3 8-9	R Hornby	44
4	(2)	90-	JERSEYGEORDIE (10) J Osborne 3 8-9	S Osborne	32
5	(6)	335222-	● SOVEREIGN WEALTH (11) (F) G Boughey 3 8-9	P Cosgrave★72	
6	(7)	05-	VON DUTCH (10) K P De Foy 3 8-9	R Scott	54
7	(4)	66-	WEDONTTELLTHETRUTH (10) M Loughnane 3 8-9	J Peate	55

BLINKERS: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 5.

SP FORECAST: 2-7 Sovereign Wealth, 6 Von Dutch, 7 Hunterian, 20 Contemplation, 25 Wedonttellthetruth, 100 Jerseygeordie, 200 Wingstar.

2.15 MOVE TO MIDNITE CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 1)
£3,140 (6) 6f 20yds (11)

1	(1)	53331-1	● MIDNIGHT CALL (4) (C&D) A Carroll 5 10-0	M Slater(7)	54
2	(8)	088355-	CATHERINE CHROI (32) (D,F) (T) I Jardine 8 9-9	M Tabti(5)	55
3	(6)	L90806-	CAUSIN A COMMOTION (47) (C&D) N Wilson 4 9-9	Rhys Elliott(5)	46
4	(2)	L04006-	COAST (15) (C&D) S Dixon 7 9-9	K O'Neill	46
5	(5)	L03016-	LADY BOUQUET (18) (C&D) P Kirby 5 9-9	C Hardie	58
6	(10)	12/5036-	MINTANA (20) (C&D) H Evans 6 9-9	G Mangan	56
7	(11)	558784-	PIPERSTOWN (31) (C&D) K Frost 5 9-9	Doubtful	
8	(9)	274088-	RED WALLS (29) (C&D) L Williamson 8 9-9	A Redman(7)	50
9	(3)	L7D89-2	SECRET ROAD (2) (D,F) James Owen 8 9-9	P Cosgrave★59	
10	(7)	73578L-	SISTERS IN THE SKY (15) (C&D) G Harris 7 9-9	F Marsh	50
11	(4)	574867-	TOMMYTWOHOOTS (31) (C&D) S A Harris 8 9-9	A Rawlinson	53

BLINKERS: Nos. 2, 4 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 6, 10, 11.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Secret Road, 2 Midnight Call, 15-2 Lady Bouquet, 12 Catherine Chroi, 14 Red Walls, 16 Mintana, 20 Causin A Commotion, Coast, 25 Others.

2.45 MOVE TO MIDNITE CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 2)
£3,140 (6) 6f 20yds (11)

1	(11)	455L99-	AUTUMN ANGEL (31) (C&D) A Carroll 7 9-9	Jack Doughty	58
2	(6)	86008L-	BACK TOMORROW (18) (C&D) (T) Ewan Whillans 6 9-9	G Fairley	44
3	(3)	696560-	BEAUZON (45) (C&D) I Williams 7 9-9	C Bishop★60	
4	(4)	LL4469-	EAST TYRONE (28) (D,F) P Kirby 4 9-9	C Hardie	58
5	(9)	777680-	FLICKA'S GIRL (15) (C) M Attwater 4 9-9	P Bradley	55
6	(2)	587L60-	● GENIUS MISTAKE (28) M Sowersby 4 9-9	Rhys Elliott(5)	59
7	(10)	558545-	OLDBURY LAD (130) G Harris 4 9-9	F Marsh	47
8	(1)	0578LL-	POET (10) (D) S Dixon 7 9-9	K O'Neill	49
9	(5)	624238-	THE COLA KID (27) (D) G Harris 9 9-9	T Heard	58
10	(8)	L70879-	TRIPLE CHARGED (31) (F) Faye Bramley 4 9-9	D J Murphy(7)	52
11	(7)	9/8598L-	TWILIGHT POPPY (68) K Frost 4 9-9	S Osborne	44

BLINKERS: Nos. 1, 2, 4, 8 VISOR: No. 9 TONGUE STRAP: No. 9 CHEEK PIECES: No. 7.

SP FORECAST: 3 Beauzon, 10-3 East Tyrone, 4 Triple Charged, 9-2 Autumn Angel, 8 The Cola Kid, 10 Oldbury Lad, 20 Genius Mistake, Back Tomorrow, 33 Others.

3.15 BET 10 GET 40 WITH BETMGM HANDICAP 3YO
£4,972 (4) 6f 20yds (7)

1	(3)	355421-	BAKER BLUE (19) (D) D Cunha 9-10	C Rodriguez	85
2	(2)	193428-	BETTER AND BETTER (59) (D) K R Burke 9-6	S Gray	86
3	(5)	521-	AUGUSTUS GLOOP (100) (D,F) J Fanshawe 9-6	G Wood	83
4	(6)	52212-	● MAGIC STONE (116) (D) W Haggas 9-6	C Fallon★91	
5	(4)	22158-	DUSKAURA (144) A Carroll 9-3	W Carson	79
6	(7)	32163 2-	VICTOR CEE (19) (D) P McEntee 9-0	J F Egan	87
7	(1)	1L0-	SAFFRON DANDY (138) R Hannon 8-13	S M Levey	81

SP FORECAST: 2 Augustus Gloop, 3 Baker Blue, 7-2 Magic Stone, 8 Better And Better, 10 Victor Cee, 12 Saffron Dandy, 14 Duskaura.

3.45 BETMGM'S GOLDEN GOALS HANDICAP
£4,972 (4) 7f 36yds (8)

1	(6)	L8L16L-	SOCIETY MAN (20) (D) C Johnston 6 9-10	R Scott	93
2	(3)	200374-	DIAMONDONTHEHILL (11) (D) Dr R Newland & J Insole 8 9-6	S Osborne	94
3	(2)	306071-	FOLLOW YOUR HEART (17) (C&D) M Loughnane 8 9-5	C Fallon	92
4	(8)	821835-	AL MUQDAD (17) (C&D) D O'Meara 6 9-4	D Nolan	91
5	(7)	356164-	THURSO (17) (C&D) R Hughes 4 9-2	F Marsh	92
6	(4)	33/0540-	● ECHALAR (20) J Chapple-Hyam 4 9-1	H Davies★95	
7	(5)	308980-	THE TURPINATOR (50) (D) G Tuer 9 9-1	G Wood	87
8	(1)	83463-5	GRABAJABBA (3) (C&D) M Appleby 5 9-0	A Rawlinson	93

TONGUE STRAP: No. 3 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 5 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 3 Diamondonthehill, 4 Follow Your Heart, 9-2 Al Muqdad, 7 Society Man, Thurso, Grabajabba, 8 Echalar, 20 The Turpinator.

4.15 MIDNITE A NEXT GENERATION BETTING APP HANDICAP
£3,716 (5) 2m 120yds (6)

1	(3)	435032-	BASHFUL BOY (9) D Pipe 10 10-0	R Hornby	78
2	(5)	3L6092-	● CIRCUIT BREAKER (7) J & A O'Neill 6 10-0	J Dace(5)	80
3	(6)	541633-	APPIER (17) (C) R Bandey 7 9-12	K O'Neill	77
4	(4)	311L09-	ZEPHLYN (21) (D) (T) Ewan Whillans 7 9-2	R Scott	79
5	(1)	7547/4L-	HILL STATION (J36) (C) Dr R Newland & J Insole 7 9-1	M Ghiani	78
6	(2)	74212-2	FASCINATING SHADOW (3) James Owen 8 8-11	P Cosgrave★81	

VISOR: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5 HOOD: Nos. 3, 5.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Circuit Breaker, 5-2 Bashful Boy, 3 Fascinating Shadow, 6 Appier, 15-2 Hill Station, 50 Zephlyn.

4.45 ALWAYS GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY HANDICAP (DIV 1)
£4,711 (6) 1m 142yds (10)

1	(3)	140441-	● FIRST GREYED (7) (C&D) T Faulkner 8 9-13(4ex)	C Fallon★73	
2	(1)	098459-	ANTIQUITY (20) J Osborne 4 9-10	S Osborne	70
3	(8)	968L95-	APACHE GREEN (20) S Woods 4 9-10	K O'Neill	70
4	(5)	22L205-	SUPER HIT (10) (F) Darryll Holland 5 9-10	R Hornby	71
5	(10)	62466L-	COOLREE (15) S England 7 9-9	S Gray	72
6	(6)	22314-1	LATIN (4) (C&D) James Owen 5 9-9(5ex)	P Bradley	67
7	(2)	372302-	YEHUDI (24) M Loughnane 4 9-8	G Wood	70
8	(9)	214267-	PESSOA (24) (C&D) A Wintle 7 9-7	Taryn Langley(5)	67
9	(4)	1/LLLL9-	ROGUE SOLDIER (10) (C&D) M Young 6 9-5	C Hutchinson	49
10	(7)	907817-	QUITE SWEET (35) A Carroll 4 9-3	M Ghiani	69

BLINKERS: No. 3 VISOR: Nos. 1, 6 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 7.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 First Greyed, 11-4 Latin, 9-2 Yehudi, 11-2 Super Hit, 10 Quite Sweet, Apache Green, 16 Antiquity, 33 Coolree, 50 Others.

5.15 ALWAYS GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY HANDICAP (DIV 2)
£4,711 (6) 1m 142yds (9)

1	(4)	025834-	BASS PLAYER (10) (C&D) K Frost 7 9-12	A Voikhansky	70
2	(8)	433251-	SUZUKA (78) (C&D,F) A Watson 4 9-10	Harry Vigors(7)	68
3	(1)	59588U-	TOKEN GESTURE (20) M Usher 4 9-10	T Heard	71
4	(7)	487475-	CORUNDUM (24) L Wadham 5 9-9	R Hornby★74	
5	(2)	084472-	EQUION (15) (C&D) A Carroll 8 9-9	C Fallon	70
6	(9)	445751-	KING OF SPEED (24) (C&D) M Loughnane 7 9-8	J Peate	70
7	(6)	508L94-	● FOOLS RUSH IN (10) (C&D) R Carr 8 9-7	JP Sullivan	72
8	(3)	437/26L-	LIGHTNINGBOLTZOOM (299) Charlie Pike 5 9-7	H Davies	71
9	(5)	1668/L0-	MOORETOWN LAD (24) (D) A Wintle 6 9-4	Grace McEntee	48

VISOR: No. 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 6, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 4.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Suzuka, 4 King Of Speed, 9-2 Equion, 5 Bass Player, 7 Corundum, Fools Rush In, 25 Token Gesture, 33 Lightningboltzoom, 66 Mooretown Lad.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Kieran O'Neill 9% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** A Carroll 10% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 2.45 Poet (blinkers). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.15 My Champion. 2.15 Secret Road(hcp). 3.45 Al Muqdad(hcp). 5.15 Corundum(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Back Tomorrow** (2.45) & **Zephlyn** (4.15) 230 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 3.15 **Better And Better** from A Keatley to K R Burke, **Duskaura** from A Watson to A Carroll. 5.15 **Lightningboltzoom** from P Attwater to Charlie Pike, **Suzuka** from R Varian to A Watson.

BY **ELEANOR CROOKS**

EMMA RADUCANU suffered a first ever loss to Maria Sakkari in a belated season debut for Great Britain at the United Cup.

The 23-year-old was a late withdrawal from Britain's opening match at the mixed team event in Perth against Japan on Sunday because of a foot problem that bothered her throughout pre-season.

She was playing her first match since October, after she struggled with illness at the end of last season.

And Raducanu lacked the sharpness and stamina to make it five wins from five against Sakkari, going down 6-3 3-6 6-1 to condemn Britain to defeat against Greece. "I started hitting two weeks ago, so it's been a good two and a bit months where I didn't play," she said.

"Today, being able to produce that, having not played, is just giving me confidence to what I can do when I do practise more. I know now I just need to get my head down, keep working.

"Today was good exposure. Happy I spent two and a half hours out there and I'm OK right now. The season is still very, very young. Week one. There's a long way to go."

Raducanu was supported courtside by coach Francisco Roig and GB captain Tim Henman, who said: "I said before the last match she was really, really close. She had another good practice session and she wanted to get out there and give it a try. She's been brilliant as a part of the team, she loves representing her country, so it's fantastic to have her out on the court tonight."

Raducanu made the perfect start, breaking the Sakkari serve in the opening game, but was soon under pressure, with the Greek winning six of the last seven games in the opening set.

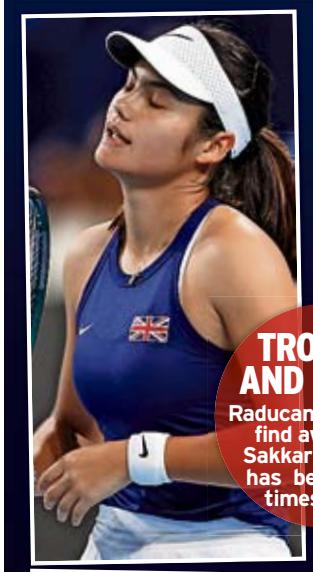
The former US Open champion fought back from a break down to win the second set but faded quickly in the decider.

Earlier, Billy Harris came agonisingly close to one of the biggest victories of his career when he lost out to Stefanos Tsitsipas in a deciding tie-break. Harris, ranked nearly 100 places lower than the Greek at 127, won the opening set and pushed Tsitsipas all the way in a 4-6 6-1 7-6 (4) defeat.

Tsitsipas praised his British opponent, who was a replacement for the injured Jack Draper, saying: "He put out an incredible performance. I haven't played such a high quality match in a long time. He did absolutely great, pushing me to my limits."

Draper is set to make his return to action in Great Britain's Davis Cup tie against Norway next month after being named in a five-strong team.

The British No.1 has played just one match since Wimbledon because of bone bruising in his left arm.



TROUBLE AND GREEK
Raducanu could not find away past Sakkari, who she has beaten four times before

RADUCANU GETS THE SAKK

Emma dumped by Sakkari in Brit defeat

JONNY BE GOOD
Clayton won in 2021

Quartet go wild for Premier League

BY **RICHARD LEWIS**

JONNY CLAYTON, the 2021 champion, Stephen Bunting, Josh Rock and Gerwyn Price have been named as the four wild cards for this year's Premier League season.

The quartet will join the automatic picks, who are the top four in the order of merit – the new double **DARTS** world champion Luke Littler, who is world No.1, defending champion Luke Humphries, Gian van Veen and Michael van Gerwen.

Van Veen, runner-up in last Saturday's world final, and Northern Ireland's World Cup winner Rock will make their debuts in the competition. The season lasts 17 weeks, starting in Newcastle on Thursday, February 5 before the final at London's O2 on May 28.

Fresh from his Ally Pally glory, Littler will be looking to regain this crown after losing to Humphries in last year's final. PDC Chief Executive Matt Porter said: "The selection for this year's tournament was particularly difficult given the incredible standard of darts we've seen over the last 12 months."

Former world championship semi-finalist Wayne Mardle added: "Danny Noppert has been really unlucky. He's reached the semi-finals of four majors."

WORLD OF SPORT

Tuima latest to join bullish Newcastle

RUGBY UNION

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY**

NEWCASTLE have continued their spending spree by luring England prospect Rusi Tuima to join the Red Bull revolution.

The forward, who has been at Exeter since 2019, has signed a two-year deal and will join ahead of next season with Chiefs team-mate Josh Hodge.

TUIMA

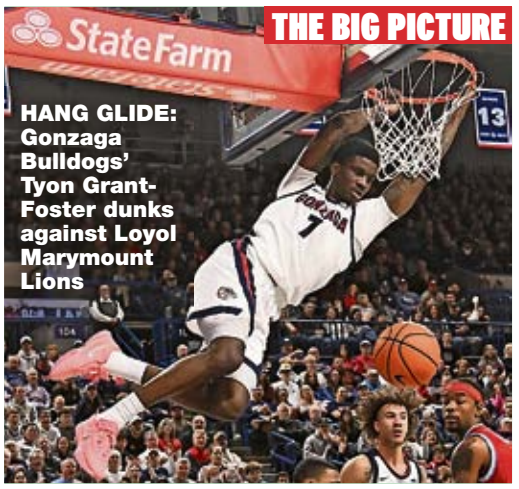
Tuima's 19 tries in 74 appearances has attracted the attention of England head coach Steve Borthwick, who called him into senior camp in 2024.

The 25-year-old said: "I'm sad to be leaving the place I've called home for the past eight seasons, but I'm equally excited for a new adventure."

The lock is the latest to join since the energy drink giant took over last August.

Ex-All Blacks back-row Hoskins Sotutu and Argentina lock Pedro Rubiolo are also on board for next term.

THE BIG PICTURE



HANG GLIDE: Gonzaga Bulldogs' Tyon Grant-Foster dunks against Loyol Marymount Lions

Aaron shows mettle

NFL

BY **KEITH WEBSTER**

AARON RODGERS threw a touchdown pass in the final minute as the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Baltimore Ravens 26-24 to clinch the last play-off place.

The quarterback, 42, who claimed he still has no retirement plans said: "It's pretty emotional."

The Carolina Panthers were crowned NFC South division winners after a late Zane Gonzalez field goal helped seal a 19-17 win for the Atlanta Falcons over the New Orleans Saints.

Trevor Lawrence threw three touchdown passes as Jacksonville claimed the AFC South title with a 41-10 thrashing of the Tennessee Titans.

Denver clinched the top seed in the AFC and a bye in the play-offs with a 19-3 win over the LA Chargers.

10 to tackle

1. Which Italian won the WRC3 category at the 2025 Rally Saudi Arabia, alongside his co-driver Alessandro Arnaboldi?
2. Against whom last month did Jamie Vardy score his first double for Cremonese in a Serie A away game?
3. Who won the feature race in the 13th round of the 2025 F2 Championship, in Qatar?
4. What name is given to the practice of a cricket team being forced to start its second innings immediately after its first?
5. What was the score in the drawn 1965 rugby union match between Ireland and France?
6. Who was the first Jamaican athlete to break the world record for the men's 100m?
7. How many points is the bull worth in darts?
8. Which Serbian-born tennis player won four Australian Open women's singles titles in the 1990s?
9. Which Finnish javelin thrower won the gold medal at the 1983 World Athletics Championships in Helsinki with her final throw, leaving Britain's Fatima Whitbread in tears?
10. Which show jumper was BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 1960?

RATINGS
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

ANSWERS: 1 Matteo Fontana. 2 Bologna. 3 Victor Martins. 4 Following on. 5 3-3. 6 Asafa Powell. 7 50. 8 Monica Seles. 9 Tiina Liilak. 10 David Broome.

JOE SHOWS PALS HOW IT'S TON

Calm Root to success is clear as team-mates caught out again

BY **RORY DOLLARD** in Sydney

JOE ROOT insisted his England team-mates had no room for regrets after his Sydney century kept the tourists alive in the final Ashes Test.

Root was at his virtuoso best as he rapped out 160 at a sold-out SCG, his second ton on Australian soil in the last month following a 12-year wait.

It was a classical knock that saw him control conditions, subdue the home attack and lift his side to 384 all out – their highest total Down Under since 2017. But Australia made heavy inroads as they responded, punishing their rivals for failing to make an even bigger score.

Harry Brook had 84 when he edged a lazy stroke, while Jamie Smith (above) had fans shaking their heads in disbelief when he slapped a half-tracker from part-timer Marnus Labuschagne straight to cover.

Root outlasted both in a six-and-a-half-hour siege but backed his partners' attacking instincts.

"No one is more frustrated than the guy who loses his wicket," he said. "But I don't think regret is the right word. It's very easy to over-analyse and look too much at certain dismissals. There is method behind what we're trying to do.

"We're trying to move the game forward all the time and when it doesn't come off, it can look a certain way.

"But as a batter your job is not to survive, it's to score runs. You can't win games just surviving.

"Sometimes you just make a mistake and you have to learn from it. That's the art of the game: it's not being too hard on yourself, not being too soft on yourself, it's being real and understanding what you need to do to get the best out of yourself.

"They are clearly very good players and I back them 100 percent."

Root savoured his own experience, equalling Australian great Ricky Ponting's record of 41 Test hundreds at one of the country's most storied venues.

Only hall of famers Sachin Tendulkar and Jacques Kallis sit above him in the list of Test century-makers.

But he is more concerned with helping England end a disappointing tour with back-to-back wins, building a brighter legacy for the likes of Brook (below) and Smith to carry forward.

Root said: "I don't know how many opportunities I'm going to get to come back to Australia, obviously, but I'd love to. For a lot of this squad this is the first time they've been out here. If we can find a way to to win this fixture, next time we come here the last two memories would be two Ashes wins.

"I guess the baggage that might have been there for a previous generation might not be there for them."

Ben Stokes was the pick of the bowlers, after a wayward start from Matthew Potts and Brydon Carse. The England captain trapped Jake Weatherald lbw and then won a heated battle with Labuschagne, who edged to gully.

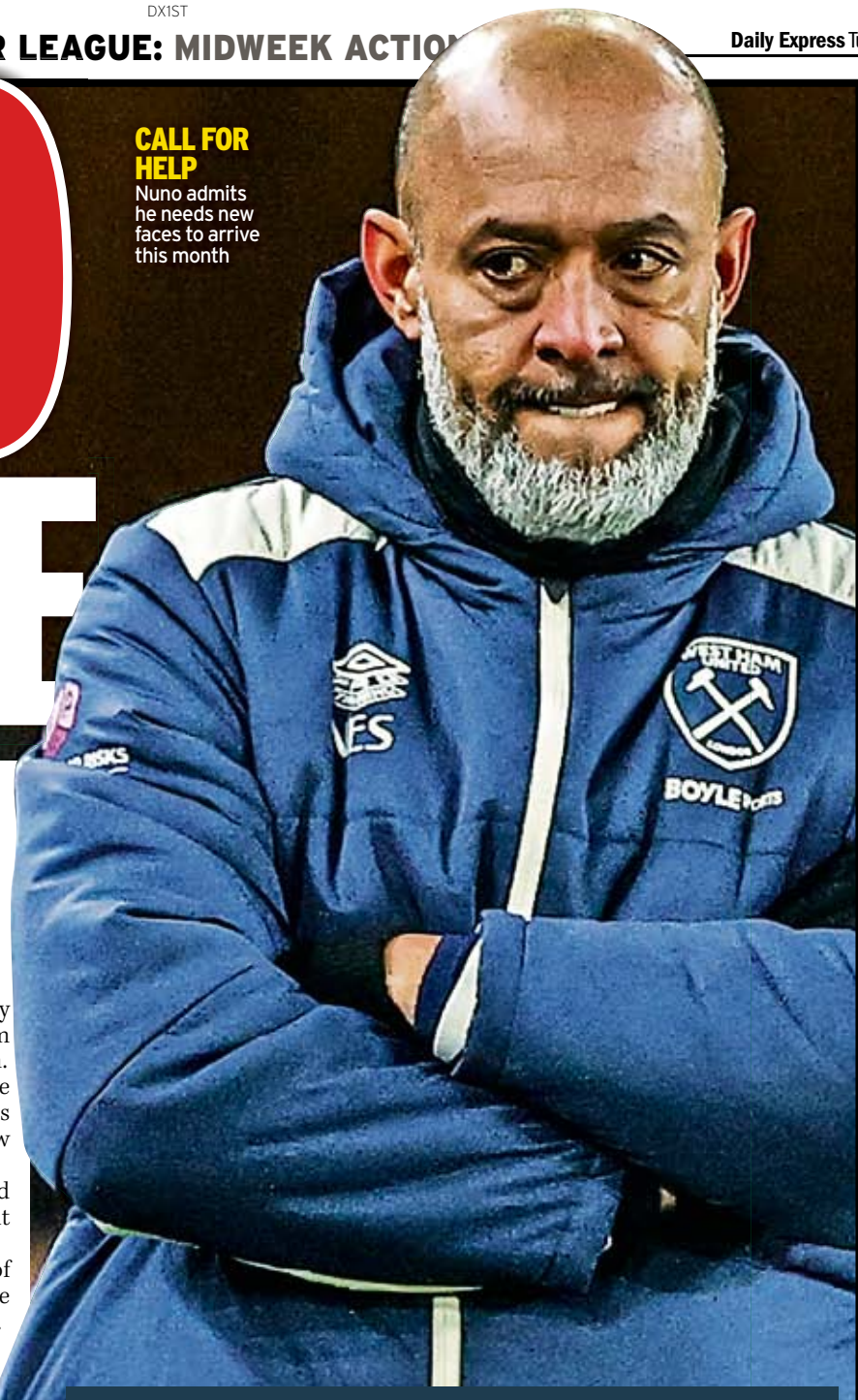
The pair shared some frosty words in the middle, with Stokes at one stage putting his arm around Labuschagne's shoulders as the exchange continued.

Physical contact is typically frowned upon and could warrant a word from the match referee, but Australia seamer Michael Neser, who returned figures of 4-60, was hardly surprised to see his Queensland team-mate in the thick of things.

"He's a such a strong competitor he can get under your skin. That's just Marnus," he said. "I don't know what was said or done, not a clue, but it depends on the context."

A GREAT KNOCK
Only two men have more Test tons than Root's 41

NUNO OFFENCE



CALL FOR HELP Nuno admits he needs new faces to arrive this month

'Lack of effort' not what I meant says Hammers boss

WEST HAM v NOTTINGHAM FOREST
Premier League: KO 8pm, Sky Sports

BY **JOSHUA PECK**

UNDER-FIRE Nuno Espirito Santo insists his criticism of West Ham's players was lost in translation.

The Hammers go into tonight's must-not-lose clash with Nottingham Forest on the back of Saturday's chastening 3-0 loss at bottom club Wolves.

Nuno stated after that match there was a lack of effort from his players, though backtracked on his comments yesterday.

But the former Forest boss did double down on his suggestion that players are not doing what is asked of them when they step on the pitch.

"We didn't do the things we should, all the things we were trying to build around," he said.

"No, not lack of effort, maybe I choose bad words. It was more that we were not playing like the way we planned to do. The decisions we had to take in particular moments, and the way we wanted to compete.

"The team has rules and we broke the rules. It is very bad for me to see we are trying to put crosses in, to come to nothing. It was tough to take."

West Ham confirmed the signing of Taty Castellanos from Lazio yesterday and that could spell the end of Callum Wilson's time at the London Stadium.

Wilson (inset) joined from Newcastle just four months ago but Nuno has now brought in Castellanos and fellow forward Pablo Felipe this month.

That means the former England international, 33, will be pushed right down the pecking order.

"Me and Callum, we had a lot of conversations. Just 10 minutes ago we were speaking about this," said Nuno.

"I personally decided that these strikers have joined. So Callum is a very experienced man.

"He's been in the game for so much time. He knows that his position has changed.

"So we were honest. I don't know where things will go."

Felipe and Castellanos could make their debuts tonight, having trained with team-mates yesterday.

Nuno added: "Now we are in the moment of rebalancing our squad.

"We need help from those that are coming.

"Players that come with purpose, players that come with the intention to be brave to join us in this situation. But we are the ones that have to make the situation better."

Dyche denies it's do or die

BY **SARAH CLAPSON**

SEAN DYCHE insists Nottingham Forest's clash with West Ham tonight is **NOT** a relegation decider.

But the Reds boss (inset) is under no illusions about the significance of the trip to the capital.

Victory for Forest would increase their buffer over the 18th-placed Hammers to seven points.

But if the result goes in favour of the hosts it would fray a few nerves in the East Midlands.

Asked about it being seen as a six-pointer, Dyche said: "We are only just at the halfway point so there is a lot more football to be played.

"It's very helpful to win these games, quite obviously. So that's the challenge, go and win away – take on the challenge right in front of our eyes." Forest have lost their last four and Dyche added: "My teams have always been organised when it comes to defending.

"We've made a few mistakes which we have been punished for."

Forest have submitted plans to redevelop the City Ground that would increase the capacity to over 50,000.

FOX IN THE BOX Fatawu wins it in dying seconds

FATAWU'S SUPREME STRIKE FOR MARTI

Leicester City 2
West Brom 1

BY **JORDAN BLACKWELL**

ABDUL FATAWU struck a stunning late volley to earn Leicester victory and ease the pressure on Marti Cifuentes.

Fatawu hammered the ball high into the net with seconds remaining at the King Power Stadium, with Jakub Stolarczyk having made a series of fine saves to deny West Brom in the second half.

The Baggies arrived on the back of nine straight defeats on the road, their worst run for 50 years, but were the better side with the Foxes on the back foot for nearly three-quarters of the match.

But Fatawu has come up with plenty of spectacular goals this season and his latest clinched the three points that moved the hosts into the top half of the Championship.

The match was played out in front of a sparse crowd at the King Power as a fan boycott over the running of the club, plus temperatures dipping to -5 degrees saw supporters stay at home, with an estimated 10,000 empty seats.

Leicester did well early on to warm the spirits and their speed on the ball paid off in the form of a terrifically-worked goal, with Jordan Ayew finishing off the move.

Then came West Brom's period of dominance and the Baggies levelled on 34 minutes.

Karlan Grant was given too much space on the West Brom left, the forward using his pace to race into the box and finish into the far corner. The Albion dominance continued after the break and Leicester needed their keeper.

Isaac Price had a rasping effort brilliantly tipped onto the post by Stolarczyk, who then denied Aune Heggebo, Samuel Iling-Junior and George Campbell.

The Foxes weathered the storm and managed one chance at the death, Stephy Mavididi crossing and Fatawu thundering the ball past Josh Griffiths to earn the win.

SPORT IN BRIEF

African Cup Of Nations - Round of 16

EGYPT (0)..... 3 Attia 70, Ibrahim 97 Salah 120
BENIN (0)..... 1 Dossou 83

AET – Score after 90 mins 1-1.

NIGERIA (2)..... 4 Lookman 20 Osimhen 25, 47 Adams 75
MOZAMBIQUE (0). 0

Sky Bet Championship

LEICESTER (1)..... 2 Ayew 18 Fatawu 90
WEST BROM (1)... 1 Ahearne-Grant 34

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	26	15	7	4	57	29	52
Middlesbro	26	13	7	6	37	26	46
Ipswich	25	12	8	5	42	24	44
Preston	26	11	10	5	36	25	43
Millwall	26	12	7	7	29	33	43
Watford	25	11	8	6	37	29	41
Hull	25	12	5	8	40	38	41
Stoke	26	12	4	10	32	23	40
Wrexham	26	10	10	6	38	32	40
Bristol City	26	11	6	9	38	29	39
QPR	26	11	5	10	38	39	38
Leicester	26	10	7	9	37	38	37
Derby	26	9	8	9	35	35	35
Birmingham	26	9	7	10	35	36	34
Southampton	26	8	9	9	38	38	33
Sheff Utd	25	10	2	13	36	38	32
Swansea	26	9	5	12	27	33	32
West Brom	26	9	4	13	29	35	31
Charlton	25	7	8	10	25	32	29
Blackburn	25	7	7	11	24	30	28
Portsmouth	24	6	7	11	21	35	25
Norwich	26	6	6	14	28	39	24
Oxford Utd	25	5	7	13	25	35	22
Sheff Wed	25	1	8	16	18	51	-7

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NFL: Las Vegas Raiders 14 Kansas City Chiefs 12, Philadelphia Eagles 17 Washington Commanders 24, New England Patriots 38 Miami Dolphins 10, Los Angeles Rams 37 Arizona Cardinals 20, Denver Broncos 19 Los Angeles Chargers 3, Chicago Bears 16 Detroit Lions 19, Buffalo Bills 35 New York Jets 8, Pittsburgh Steelers 26 Baltimore Ravens 24.

TENNIS

ATP & WTA UNITED CUP (Perth & Sydney, Australia)—**Group A: USA v Spain:** T Fritz (USA) bt J Munar (Spa) 7-6 (7-4) 3-6 7-6 (8-6), J Bouzas Maneiro (Spa) bt C Gauff (USA) 6-1 6-7 (3-7) 6-0, C Gauff (USA) & C Harrison (USA) bt Y Cavalle-Reimers (Spa) & I Cervantes (Spa) 7-6 (7-5) 6-0. USA bt Spain 2-1 **Group D: Czechia v Norway:** J Mensik (Cze) bt C Ruud (Nor) 7-5 7-6 (8-6), B Krejcikova (Cze) bt M Helgoe (Nor) 6-4 6-3, B Krejcikova (Cze) & A Pavlasek (Cze) bt U Eikeri (Nor) & V Durasovic (Nor) 7-5 6-2. Czechia bt Norway 3-0. **Group F: Germany v Poland:** H Hurkacz (Pol) bt A Zverev (Ger) 6-3 6-4, I Swiatek (Pol) bt E Lys (Ger) 3-6 6-3 6-4, K Kawa (Pol) & J Zielinski (Pol) bt L Siegemund (Ger) & A Zverev (Ger) 7-6 (8-6) 6-3. Poland bt Germany 3-0. **Group E: Great Britain v Greece:** S Tsitsipas (Gre) bt B Harris (Gbr) 4-6 6-1 7-6 (7-4), M Sakkari (Gre) bt E Raducanu (Gbr) 6-3 3-6 6-1, O Nicholls (Gbr) & N Skupski (Gbr) bt D Papamichail (Gre) & S Sakellaridis (Gre) 6-2 3-6 10-4. Greece bt Great Britain 2-1.

TODAY'S DIARY

(7.45pm unless stated)

African Cup Of Nations - Round of 16
Algeria v Congo DR (4pm)
Ivory Coast v Burkina Faso (7pm)

Premier League
West Ham v Nottingham Forest (8pm) (Live on Sky Sports Main Event)

William Hill Scottish Premiership
Livingston v St Mirren
Rangers v Aberdeen (8pm) (Live on Sky Sports Football)

KDM Evolution Trophy Round of 16
Arbroath v East Fife
Ayr v Stranraer
Partick v Inverness CT (Live on BBC Alba)
Queen's Park v Forfar
Raith v Queen of the South
St Johnstone v Ross County
Stirling v Stenhousemuir
Airdrieonians v Montrose

Enterprise National League North: Macclesfield FC v Radcliffe.

Enterprise National League South: Eastbourne Borough v Horsham, Enfield Tn v Hampton & Richmond.

Southern Premier South: Basingstoke Tn v Hanwell Tn, Wimborne Tn v Taunton Tn (7.30), Yate Tn v Poole Tn.

Isthmian Premier: Canvey Island v Chichester City, Folkestone Invicta v Aveley, Lewes v Billericay.

Northern—Premier Divison: Bamber Bridge v Gainsborough Trinity, Cleethorpes Tn v Whitby Tn, FC United of Manchester v Stockton Tn, Lancaster City v Rushall Olympic.

CRICKET

Fifth Test Match—day 4 of 5: Australia v England (Sydney, 11.30pm).

TENNIS

ATP & WTA United Cup (Perth, Sydney, Australia).
ATP & WTA Brisbane International (Brisbane, Australia).

MULLIN'S BACK

WREXHAM have confirmed Paul Mullin's return from a loan spell at Wigan, where he scored five goals in 26 games.

Before his June departure, Mullin (right) scored 110 goals in helping Wrexham win three successive promotions to reach the Championship.

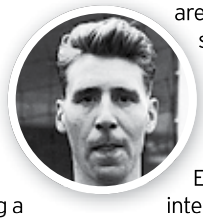
The Red Dragons' Hollywood owner Ryan Reynolds had said he could not imagine the 31-year-old "in another kit". A statement from the Welsh club said: "Wrexham AFC can confirm Wigan Athletic have chosen to activate the break clause in Paul Mullin's loan contract, and the striker will return from his spell with the Latics.

"The club will assess Mullin on his return and, having only represented one club this season, explore all possible options for the striker's future."

McDonald mourned

FORMER England goalkeeper Colin McDonald has died at the age of 95.

McDonald (right) played eight matches for the national team, including all four matches in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, keeping a clean sheet against champions Brazil.



He made more than 200 appearances for Burnley between 1953 and 1959 before a leg injury, sustained playing for the Football League against the Irish League, forced his retirement.

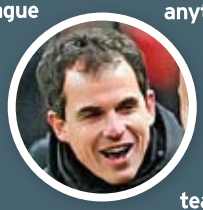
"Burnley Football Club are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former Burnley and England international goalkeeper Colin McDonald at the age of 95," the Clarets said.

"Our thoughts are with all Colin's family and friends."

REG WANTS 40

REGIS LE BRIS is not ready to declare Sunderland safe yet – even though they have banked 30 points.

In each of the past two Premier League seasons, 30 points have been enough to swerve relegation.



But Le Bris will not toast survival until the traditional safety mark of 40 points is reached.

"Not yet, not yet," Le Bris (above) smiled when asked if his side were safe. "I would like, but it is important to stay consistent. We want to set this first limit and after that we will see if we can achieve anything else.

"It shows the consistency of the project and the quality of the squad.

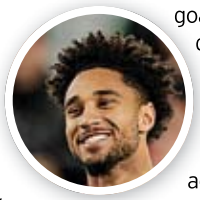
"The teamwork at this club is impressive.

"It's really positive at this point to have 30 points. We need 10 more probably, so it is time to ride the wave."

Schade's Europe bid

KEVIN SCHADE admits European football would be a dream for Brentford.

Since promotion in 2021, the Bees' highest finish in the Premier League has been ninth.



But a 4-2 win at Everton on Sunday, courtesy of Igor Thiago's hat-trick, lifted Keith Andrews' side to seventh – just four points off fourth place.

While reaching the Champions League may be fanciful, Schade (below) hopes they can qualify for Europe.

The Germany forward, who has six goals this season, said: "The main goal is not to go down, obviously, then I would say it's not a goal but a dream we can achieve, if everything goes right, to qualify for Europe. For me, personally, [the dream is] to go to the World Cup and I need good games for that and the team."

BY **KEITH WEBSTER**

WAYNE ROONEY believes Liam Rosenior has served his "apprenticeship" and is ready to take the reins at Chelsea.

ROO TIPS FORMER NO.2 TO MANAGE BLUES JOB

Rosenior looks set to quit his position as Strasbourg head coach and replace Enzo Maresca at Chelsea, although Colin McFarlane is expected to remain in interim charge for tomorrow's visit to Fulham.

Rosenior flew into London on Sunday ahead of a meeting with the Blues' hierarchy.

Having worked as an assistant to Rooney at Derby before taking interim charge in 2022 when the former England captain left the club, Rosenior had two years as Hull boss before being sacked in 2024 despite leading the Tigers to the brink of the Championship play-offs.

The 41-year-old Englishman has impressed in his 18 months at Strasbourg, who have the same owners as Chelsea, but now looks set to depart the Ligue 1 club to take his most high-profile job to date.

And on the BBC's Wayne Rooney Show, the former Manchester United star said: "He's taken chances and hopefully that pays off, because I think Liam is as good a coach as I've ever worked with.

"His detail, how he approaches the day-to-day, he's as good as I've worked with. Liam was so important for me. He was incredible in his coaching ability. I was more of the manager and dealing with players and everything. So I learnt a lot from him from that point of view and then I think he's done a great job as a whole. He's also got a side where you don't want to cross him as well."

Rooney was also at pains to point out that people should not be underwhelmed just because Rosenior is a young English coach, rather than a big name of world football.

He is convinced that if the appointment gets the green light, then Chelsea fans will not be upset with the results in the long run.

"If he goes in there, he won't disappoint," said Rooney. "He's been waiting for an opportunity like this. If you don't take it now, then you're never going to take it. And he's done his apprenticeship, he's done his work to try to get to that job.

"So he'll have no doubts in his mind that he's capable. For young English coaches it's massive. We don't really see English managers at big clubs. So he'd be leading the way for us."

Liam's an incredible coach... He won't disappoint

THE NEXT CHAPTER Rosenior with Rooney at Derby before Strasbourg role (above)

"He's been waiting for an opportunity like this"

BACKHOUSE Passed pitch inspection

Hull of a row over late postponement

THE EFL is seeking observations from Hull and Watford following the late postponement of their Championship fixture on Sunday.

The league is in touch with both clubs after Hull announced the game had been called off 18 minutes before kick-off, and will then determine next steps.

The Tigers released a statement saying the decision to postpone was agreed by "all parties" but Watford said they were "ready and willing" to play after the referee passed the pitch fit.

The decision to postpone was not taken by referee Anthony Backhouse, but was instead a safety-led choice.

Watford added in their statement: "We remain disappointed by the decision to postpone and by how the decision was reached. We did not agree to the postponement."

Hull's statement said areas immediately around the playing surface were deemed unsafe.

"Despite the continued efforts of the operations and grounds teams to clear the affected areas, conditions failed to improve, and with temperatures continuing to fall, player safety could not be guaranteed," the Tigers' statement added.

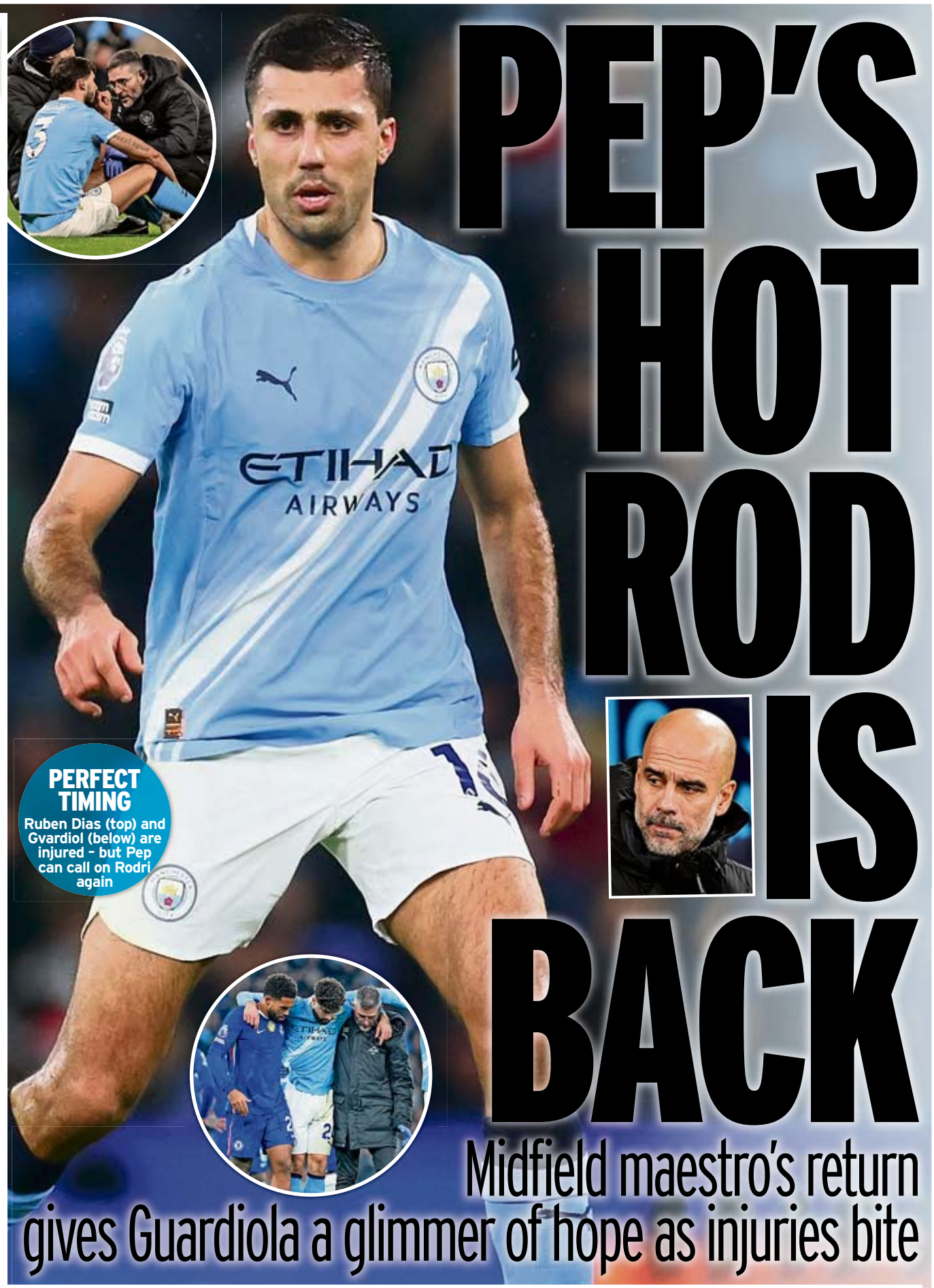
"We fully understand the frustration of supporters regarding the timing of the decision. Every effort was made to fulfil the fixture and we sincerely apologise for the inconvenience."

The match was one of three postponed in the Championship on Sunday.

MAN CITY v BRIGHTON
Premier League: Tomorrow, KO 7.30pm

PEP'S HOT ROD IS BACK

Midfield maestro's return gives Guardiola a glimmer of hope as injuries bite



PERFECT TIMING
Ruben Dias (top) and Gvardiol (below) are injured – but Pep can call on Rodri again

BY **SIMON BAJKOWSKI**

RODRI'S value at Manchester City went up even further last season when the team fell apart without him.

Somehow, and inexplicably, it has gone up again after they recovered to learn how to challenge for the Premier League title without him.

It is unfair on Nico Gonzalez, who found his feet in September and has spearheaded City's charge in the Premier League and Champions League.

The Spaniard, asked to play a role that isn't his most natural, found his groove and became one of City's most important players.

As Pep Guardiola said, they could not have achieved what they have in recent months without him.

In Gonzalez's unfortunate absence through injury since half-time in the Sunderland game, Rodri has returned and been a revelation.

The manager said he showed in 45 minutes at the Stadium of Light that he is the best in his position, and the first 45 against Chelsea were even better.

No player on the pitch won more duels (six) or created more chances (three) in that half, with City getting somebody who can do it all from the holding midfield role.

That continued to the end, with Rodri the one player looked to after conceding the late equaliser to try to concoct a winner.

Despite the dropped points, it said a lot for Rodri's expertise that a player as good as Cole Palmer was bamboozled by him with the former City youngster floundering after losing possession to the Spaniard late on, and fouling him as his only way to get the ball back.

Having tried and failed to see him back properly on a number of occasions this season, City know they have to be cautious with Rodri.

It is far too soon to be talking about him being ready to take on the burden of conducting City for the next five months, and injuries suffered to Ruben Dias and Josko Gvardiol make things even more difficult.

It is impossible for City not to be hugely encouraged though. Two appearances, two games where he has looked the best player on the pitch. City have already made moves to strengthen the squad by winning the race for Bournemouth forward Antoine Semenyo, and he will add competition for places and may even win them some matches. That contribution will be dwarfed however if Rodri can play in the games the Blues want him to be fit for.

Amid a growing injury list, having Rodri come in and look so good in these two games has felt like a cheat code unlocked for City.

Add Gonzalez back into the mix assuming his injury isn't too serious and City's midfield suddenly becomes a lot more formidable. Whether it will be enough to beat Arsenal – or indeed Aston Villa – remains to be seen.

But everything will feel more manageable for them with Rodri back in action.

Jake pegs defeat on tiredness

BY **CHRIS BEESLEY**

JAKE O'BRIEN reckons Everton looked tired in their 4-2 home defeat to Brentford – but the defender refused to use that as an excuse.

Captain James Tarkowski gave the ball away cheaply for the Bees' opener.

The contest was over early in the second half when the Toffees shipped two in two minutes.

O'Brien (right) said: "It was really disappointing. We've had two games where we'd kept clean sheets and were solid defensively, but today we were opened up.

"It looked like a tired performance from all of us, and we weren't as solid as we usually are.

"We gave away sloppy goals, didn't take our chances and let them into the game. We've been down to the bare bones, but we can't use this as an excuse as we've got players coming in who are more than good enough."

Toon fans fears are Thiaw-ing

BY **LEE RYDER**

MALICK THIAW says Newcastle's players have remained united during their up-and-down season.

The Germany international (below) put the lid on a 2-0 win over Crystal Palace with his first goal in front of the Gallowgate End as the Toon eye up a top-five spot.

Defeats at the end of 2025 to Sunderland and Manchester United had alarmed some fans.

Before the win over Palace, the word "United" was displayed at the Gallowgate End.

Thiaw said: "I loved this display. This is what has always made Newcastle United. When I watched Newcastle before I signed, they were always strong together. And now this team is so united."

A shut-out against the Eagles was Newcastle's first in 12 matches. Thiaw said: "It was time to get a clean sheet again. That is what we worked for."

CITY STEP UP GUEHI CHASE

FROM BACK PAGE

Stones (left) also out. Express Sport revealed in September that City were ready to rival Liverpool for Guehi at the end of the season – but they have an even bigger need right now.

It remains to be seen whether City make a formal offer, but there is clear interest in the defender, who came close to joining Liverpool at the end of the summer transfer window.

Guehi, 25, has made it clear to Palace that he will not sign a new contract. They are resigned to losing their key defender on a free transfer this summer.

It would take a huge offer for Palace to sell at this point, when they are still in the Conference League, are chasing down a European place and have their own fixture pile-up.

Guehi only has six months left on his deal, so any offer would be nowhere near the £35million Liverpool were ready to pay.

However, it would have to be big enough to tempt Palace.

There has been major interest from European clubs, including Barcelona, Real Madrid, Inter Milan and Juventus. Guehi can sign a pre-contract deal with a non-English club this month and would be able to command a bigger deal as a free agent.

Liverpool's interest remains solid, but only if they can land him on a free transfer.

City have recalled centre-back Max Alleyne from his season-long loan at Watford as cover.

7 BIG GAMES WHERE IT ALL WENT WRONG FOR AMORIM

TOTTENHAM 1 MAN UTD 0
MAY 21, 2025 (EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL)

Bilbao – the defining match of the Amorim era. Win and the Champions League awaited with a £100m windfall. Lose and there would be no European football the following season. In a low-quality Battle of Britain clash against Tottenham at San Mames Stadium, United were dreadful in losing 1-0 to a scruffy Brennan Johnson goal. Amorim (right) raised eyebrows by leaving Alejandro Garnacho on the bench until the final 20 minutes as United dominated possession but created few clear-cut chances.

MAN UTD 0 BOURNEMOUTH 3
DECEMBER 22, 2024 (PREMIER LEAGUE)

"Everything is so hard," was Amorim's assessment after United were beaten at home by Bournemouth for the second successive season and the Old Trafford faithful had booed his team off. Goals from Dean Huijsen, Justin Kluivert and Antoine Semenyo (left) gave Amorim just seven points from six games in charge. He had reflected on his first game at Ipswich a month earlier – a 1-1 draw – by saying, "We will suffer for a long period", but the sound of alarm bells going off was deafening.

WOLVES 2 MAN UTD 0
DECEMBER 26, 2024 (PREMIER LEAGUE)

If the ex-Sporting boss was seeking an instant response from the Bournemouth mess he was disappointed at Molineux as Wolves delivered a knockout punch on Boxing Day. Matheus Cunha, who would join United the following summer, became the second player in three games to score directly from a corner against his team, the ball sailing over Andre Onana's head. Hee-chan Hwang sealed matters on an abject night for United that saw captain Bruno Fernandes (right) sent off for the third time in the campaign.

NEWCASTLE 4 MAN UTD 1
APRIL 13, 2025 (PREMIER LEAGUE)

Amorim gave Turkey goalkeeper Altay Bayindir (left) his top-flight chance after deciding to take Onana out of the firing line following high-profile errors against Lyon in the Europa League. But the move backfired as Bayindir conceded with the first shot he faced and was culpable for giving the ball away as Bruno Guimaraes scored Newcastle's fourth. In total, Bayindir was beaten four times from six shots and captain Fernandes reflected that "this club has never suffered like this".

GRIMSBY 2 MAN UTD 2 (GRIMSBY WON 12-11 ON PENS)
AUGUST 27, 2025 (CARABAO CUP)

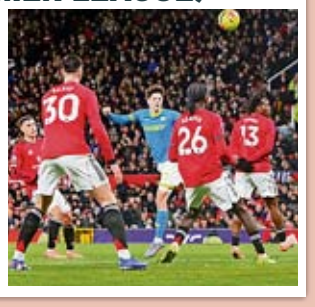
Fresh optimism was washed away by the Humber as League Two Grimsby (right) produced one of the biggest shocks in cup history. Amorim was lampooned for getting a tactics board out on the touchline as the Mariners took a 2-0 lead through Charles Vernam and Tyrell Warren, who punished a dreadful Onana error. United levelled through Bryan Mbeumo and Harry Maguire but lost an extraordinary penalty shoot-out 12-11 as Grimsby fans taunted Amorim with "sacked in the morning" chants.

BRENTFORD 3 MAN UTD 1
SEPTEMBER 27, 2025 (PREMIER LEAGUE)

Shambolic defending was at the heart of another miserable United show.

Maguire was twice caught trying to play offside as an Igor Thiago (left) brace put Brentford in command. Benjamin Sesko halved the deficit with his first goal since making a £74m summer move from RB Leipzig, but there was no reprieve for United as Fernandes missed his second penalty in a month. Mathias Jensen wrapped it up for the Bees in stoppage time as Amorim's bid to win successive league games for the first time after 10 months in charge was destroyed.

MAN UTD 1 WOLVES 1
DECEMBER 30, 2025 (PREMIER LEAGUE)



United were booed off as their topsy-turvy 2025 ended with a dismal draw at home to the Premier League's bottom side. Wolves won only their third point of the season in ending an 11-match losing run. Joshua Zirkzee's deflected shot gave United a fortunate lead that was wiped out by Ladislav Krejci (right). Amorim spoke about being "really confident" of United's potential after the game, but behind the scenes tension was building and he would be gone less than a week later.

Ruben's replacement has to be ready for the wildest of rides

THEATRE OF DREAMS

BY **JEREMY CROSS**

WHO is next to board the tragic managerial roundabout at Manchester United? Who knows...

But perhaps the more pertinent question should be, which manager worth his salt would be willing to walk through the doors of the Manchester madhouse?

Bookmakers have gone into a frenzy, offering odds on a list of potential runners and riders, which is longer than one released ahead of the Grand National.

All because United chiefs finally realised they backed the wrong horse when it came to Ruben Amorim.

To such an extent it is understood co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe and his fellow suits decided to sack Amorim BEFORE United's game at Leeds.

The feeling in the Old Trafford boardroom was that the Portuguese coach had proven too stubborn and immature to handle the demands, expectations and intrusion which come with managing one of the world's biggest football clubs.

But we've been here before.

Since Sir Alex Ferguson retired in 2013, United have had nine different managers since, either permanent or interim.

Darren Fletcher will become United's 10th in a dirty dozen years of abject failure when he takes charge on a caretaker basis for tomorrow's game at Burnley.

Potential candidates include Oliver Glasner, Xavi, Gareth Southgate, Marco Silva, Mauricio Pochettino and Enzo Maresca, the bloke Chelsea sacked just last week.

Jurgen Klopp has been discussed – but has let it be known he would never consider managing United due to his strong bond with Liverpool.

Taking charge of United would leave him walking alone.

United have refused to discuss their list of candidates, but have ruled out Donald Trump.

Yet it might take someone of Trump's narcissistic madness to be willing to accept the job if it is offered to them.

Because there is a valid reason why United have had more managers in recent times than they have won trophies.

The club's ownership has been left wanting more than the teams put out on the pitch.

The root cause of United's consistent and erroneous decline has been American billionaires the Glazers.

In 2016, then chief executive Ed Woodward wanted to appoint Pochettino, but he was overruled by the Glazers in favour of Jose Mourinho.

And look how that turned out?

Woodward also tried to appoint Klopp once, but the Glazers were not keen on the move.

Look how that turned out?

Fast forward to current times and all Ratcliffe has achieved since taking co-ownership of football operations has been to enhance the damage the Glazers have already done.

Before choosing Amorim, Ratcliffe tried to lure Thomas Tuchel to Old Trafford.

But the German got so exasperated by the interview process (he walked into one meeting to find around a dozen men sat in the room), he told the Old Trafford giants to get lost.

When Ratcliffe then turned his attentions to Amorim, he insisted on him leaving Sporting Lisbon with immediate effect.

Amorim wanted to join United last summer instead, to get a pre-season under his belt, but was left with little choice but to accept the club's ultimatum.

And look how that turned out?

Have you worked out the common denominator yet? United are no longer the attraction they once were.

Yes, the salary – and subsequent compensation – will be huge, while the fan base is massive.

But the kudos of managing United no longer is.

It chews managers up, then spits them out, because the decline has left United with a team now light years behind the likes of Manchester City, Arsenal and Liverpool.

So all we can do is wish the next man off the rank good luck.

Because he's going to need a lot of the stuff – and then some.

WELCOME TO MADCHESTER

OFF RU GO
Ruben Amorim is the latest man launched from the Old Trafford managerial merry-go-round

COMMENT

BY **JOHN CROSS**

RUBEN AMORIM was lucky to get as long as he did.

After 14 months at Old Trafford, where is the team going? What is the identity? You look at the table and could argue that Amorim has made progress.

But this is Manchester United. This is the club that sees itself as the biggest in the world and is second to none when it comes to backing their managers.

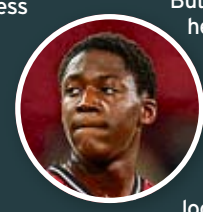
But even the most loyal United supporters had become split on Amorim.

The club should not be languishing in sixth place after 20 games this season.

The board were right to stick with Amorim into this campaign because he took over mid-season and inherited a bit of a mess from Erik ten Hag.

But a really top manager would be able to take the squad and turn them into a team fit to wear the shirt.

And he was crazy to challenge the board when, actually, he was doing a pretty average job. He needed to retain their backing – not to spark a civil war. You also have to question him on specific players. You could make a case that Kobbie Mainoo (inset) was almost promoted too soon, finding himself in the heart of England's midfield in the Euros.



But Mainoo still showed that he is one of England's brightest young stars.

And the way he has been discarded is a failure on Amorim's part.

It's a similar case with Benjamin Sesko, who looks a player utterly broken and yet would be much improved in a better team with a better manager.

When United signed Sesko, Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo, that should have been a front three to compete with the best in the Premier League, with Bruno Fernandes in the supply line.

Instead, Amorim hardly ever used them together because he was so wedded to his formation. That is not strength as a manager. It is a weakness to be so inflexible.

Even Sir Jim Ratcliffe misjudged things when he said Amorim would get time. To get time, you have to show progress.

And, ultimately, Amorim was not doing enough to warrant more time.

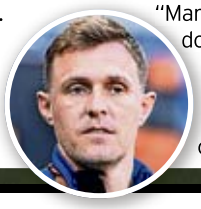
It is painful, brutal and looks chaotic. But United had to take the decision to sack him.

RATCLIFFE LEFT WITH NO OPTION

Fletcher's itching to get going

DARREN FLETCHER will finally get the chance to scratch the itch of management as the academy graduate prepares to lead Manchester United – and his twin boys – as caretaker boss.

Ruben Amorim's sacking as Old Trafford boss has seen the 41-year-old ex-midfielder parachuted into the hot seat for tomorrow's Premier League trip to struggling Burnley. It is the latest chapter in a long association with United for Fletcher (inset) whose sons Jack and Tyler have been on the bench in recent matches – the former making three substitute appearances.



Returning players may restrict opportunities under their father – who made 342 appearances for the Red Devils, winning trophies aplenty, before returning in 2020 to work within the academy as he "really got the bug" for coaching.

Speaking that year, Fletcher said: "Management is something that does really, really interest me.

"I think the itch will need to be itched at some point, if you know what I mean, if the opportunity arises."

ALL TALKED OUT

No one saw Amorim's attack coming, but everyone knew what it meant

STATS A LOW BLOW

WRECK IT RALF Only Rangnick won fewer PL games than Amorim

AMORIM'S RECORD

- Amorim won only 24 of his 63 games in charge in all competitions, or 38.1 percent, the worst rate of any United manager since the retirement of Sir Alex Ferguson aside from Ralf Rangnick's 37.9 percent in half a season as interim manager.
- United have won less than a third of their Premier League games under Amorim, 15 out of 47 compared to 19 defeats.
- His average of 1.23 points per game is the worst of any United manager in the Premier League era. Next lowest is Rangnick, who averaged 1.54.
- Amorim's longest winning run was just three matches, set in Europa League fixtures against Rangers and FCSB either side of a Premier League clash with Fulham in January and matched against Sunderland, Liverpool and Brighton in October.

HOW HE COMPARES

Since Ferguson, who won 26 major trophies in 27 years at Old Trafford and had a 65.2 percent win ratio in the Premier League, United have struggled to find a long-term figurehead.

- Ferguson took charge of 1,500 games with United. In 697 games since he retired in 2013, the club have had six permanent managers, plus Rangnick and caretakers Ryan Giggs, Michael Carrick and Ruud van Nistelrooy.
- Jose Mourinho has the best win percentage of those permanent managers with 58.3 percent, 84 out of 144 games.
- Mourinho also won the most trophies of any manager since Ferguson, with a League Cup and Europa League double in 2016-17 having opened that season with the Community Shield. Erik ten Hag won both domestic cups, Louis van Gaal won an FA Cup and David Moyes a Community Shield.
- Amorim lost exactly a third of his matches overall, the worst of any permanent United manager since Frank O'Farrell in the early 1970s.

RUBEN'S RATIOS DON'T ADD UP TO SUCCESS

Premier League	P	W	D	L	W%
Ruben Amorim	47	15	13	19	31.9%
Ralf Rangnick	24	10	7	7	41.7%
David Moyes	34	17	6	11	50.0%
Louis van Gaal	76	39	19	18	51.3%
Ole Gunnar Solskjær	109	56	29	24	51.4%
Erik ten Hag	85	44	14	27	51.8%
Jose Mourinho	93	50	26	17	53.8%
Alex Ferguson	810	528	168	114	65.2%

Amorim had the lowest win ratio of any permanent Manchester United manager in the Premier League.

All Comps (PL era)	P	W	D	L	W%
Ralf Rangnick	29	11	10	8	37.9%
Ruben Amorim	63	24	18	21	38.1%
Louis van Gaal	103	54	25	24	52.4%
David Moyes	51	27	9	15	52.9%
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer	168	91	37	40	54.2%
Erik ten Hag	128	70	23	35	54.7%
Jose Mourinho	144	84	32	28	58.3%
Alex Ferguson	1206	754	252	200	62.5%

In the Premier League era in all competitions, only Ralf Rangnick had a lower win ratio at Manchester United than Amorim's 38.1%

TOTTERING REIGN Amorim's big chance to win a trophy vanished with Europa League final defeat by Spurs

By JEREMY CROSS, who was in the room when Ruben Amorim spoke out on Sunday.

RUBEN AMORIM was the manager who said too much.

And never more so than in the press room of Elland Road, in the wake of Manchester United's 1-1 draw with Leeds United.

What is it about this stadium which makes certain individuals bare their souls?

Just last month it was Mo Salah with the mic drop, announcing he thought Liverpool and head coach Arne Slot had thrown him under the bus.

And now Amorim has done something similar, which has cost him his job.

There was no warning of what was to come when the Portuguese sat down to conduct his post-match media conference.

He appeared satisfied with his side's performance.

He threw his weight behind misfiring striker Benjamin Sesko, who had missed numerous chances to win the game for his team.

And then it happened. Like a bolt from the blue, Amorim decided to unburden himself. And his outburst left some seasoned journalists open-mouthed, with perplexed looks on their faces.

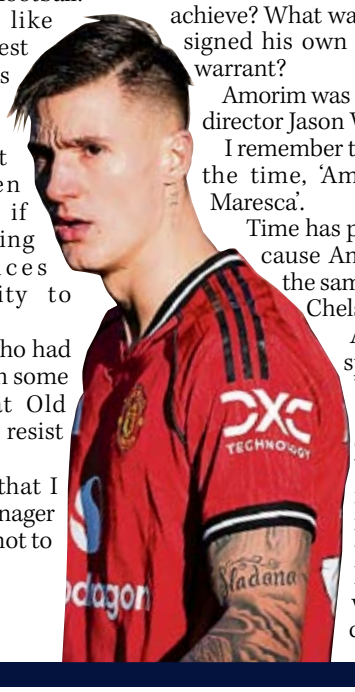
There is a skill to getting a manager to say something beyond the blandness of describing what had happened in a game of football.

To get someone like Amorim to be as honest and candid as he dares to be. So full credit to those in the room.

But no one saw what was coming when Amorim was asked if he felt he was lacking certain assurances regarding his ability to manage United.

Resembling a man who had run out of patience with some of those in power at Old Trafford, he could not resist the chance to strike.

"I just want to say that I came here to be the manager of Manchester United, not to be the coach," said Amorim. "And every department, the scouting department, the sporting director, needs to do their job. I will do mine for 18 months and then we will watch."



WASTEFUL Boss backed Sesko, but the £74 million striker has struggled

Cue utter bewilderment in the media suite.

What was Amorim hoping to achieve? What was his point? Had he signed his own professional death warrant?

Amorim was referring to sporting director Jason Wilcox.

I remember thinking to myself at the time, 'Amorim has done a Maresca'.

Time has proved me right, because Amorim has suffered the same fate as the former Chelsea boss.

Amorim had sparked an internal battle for control.

He had singled out those responsible for player recruitment, and let it be known in no uncertain terms how unacceptable it was to be told he could not make signings in this month's transfer window.

He had taken possession of the Enzo Maresca playbook.

And given United co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe the perfect chance to sack Amorim, just like Chelsea did with Maresca, whose 18-month stint at Stamford Bridge came to an end of New Year's Day following one verbal outburst too many against his club's hierarchy.

The difference between the two is that Amorim was not speaking from a position of power.

In his 14 months in charge, he did not win a trophy – unlike Maresca– and led United to their worst campaign of the Premier League era.

No one left the stadium believing Amorim would be dismissed less than 24 hours later.

But everyone with a grasp of how fickle football can be, did so knowing Amorim was someone on the brink of losing patience with those who controlled him.

Unfortunately for him, Ratcliffe's patience ran out first.

And Elland Road, of all places, had helped a United manager dig his own grave.

A LOW POINT A dejected Joshua Zirkzee after Sunday's draw at Leeds

UNITED STATEMENT IN FULL

Ruben Amorim has departed his role as head coach of Manchester United.

Ruben was appointed in November 2024 and led the team to a UEFA Europa League Final in Bilbao in May.

With Manchester United sitting sixth in the Premier League, the club's leadership has reluctantly made the decision that it is the right time to make a change. This will give the team the best opportunity of the highest possible Premier League finish.

The club would like to thank Ruben for his contribution to the club and wishes him well for the future.

Darren Fletcher will take charge of the team against Burnley on Wednesday.

LINE OF FIRE Amorim, with Sir Jim Ratcliffe, took aim at Jason Wilcox (below)

RUBEN'S A RED Amorim was all smiles as he was unveiled in November 2024

Like a bolt from the blue, Amorim unburdened himself... sparking an internal battle for control

Confusion over what to do now

FROM BACK PAGE

to Old Trafford. More realistic names include Oliver Glasner, Enzo Maresca, Laurent Blanc, Xavi, Mauricio Pochettino and Zinedine Zidane.

Darren Fletcher has taken over as caretaker and could be in charge for two games, while senior figures decide what to do. United's priority is to qualify for the Champions League but this is viewed as being too much to expect of managerial novice Fletcher. They could appoint Glasner (right) in the coming weeks, provided a deal can be struck with Crystal Palace for the Austrian, whose contract expires this summer.

But there are still reservations about Glasner's inexperience when it comes to managing a club of United's size. There is also the issue that Amorim's demise is understood to have been prompted by his unwillingness to ditch his beloved 3-4-3 system in favour of a more attacking style.

That led to friction during a meeting with director of football Jason Wilcox ahead of the Leeds game, with sources claiming Amorim "blew up".

The only team to play more times with a back three than United since Amorim was appointed in November 2024 are Palace under Glasner.

USA boss Pochettino and even England head coach Thomas Tuchel are under consideration, but a move for either would mean waiting until after the World Cup.

RESPECTED England's stars admired Southgate

Southgate quality is a trump card

COMMENT BY **ANDY DUNN**

FOR all the talk about the myriad facets needed to be a successful manager of an elite football team, one quality trumps all others.

Get the best out of the players. Simple as. If you get the very best out of what is at your disposal, you will make a decent fist of things.

As England manager, Gareth Southgate was many things. A good communicator, a Football Association man, to the blazer born. He was a diplomat, squeaky-clean and ruffled few feathers.

But England reached two European Championship finals, one World Cup semi-final and a World Cup quarter-final because he got the best out of the players.

Big players responded to his management.

Harry Kane and Declan Rice are now class-leading global players. Speak to both, and they see the hugely-important role Southgate played in their development.

For those who closely covered the long camps for his four major tournaments as national boss, it was obvious the admiration and respect from players was pretty much total.

Maybe he is not an overly adventurous manager.

But maybe, organisation, a clear plan, and motivation are what this disparate and dysfunctional United squad has desperately needed for a very, very long time.

There have been suggestions that 55-year-old Sir Gareth might not want the stress that would inevitably go with such a pressurised role.

But at the very least, Sir Jim should make it his business to find out.

DX1ST

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CITY EYE GUEHI MOVE NOW

Injuries could bring forward summer plan

MANCHESTER CITY are considering making a move to sign Marc Guehi this month.

City already had the Crystal Palace captain (left) in their sights as a top target when he becomes a free agent this summer.

But City manager Pep Guardiola will now be without Josko Gvardiol for some time after he suffered a broken leg in Sunday's draw with Chelsea, while fellow defender Ruben Dias was also injured in that game.

That leaves City short of defensive options in the title race, with John

TURN TO PAGE 55, COL 2

NO MAN'S LAND

Old Trafford chiefs divided over way forward after sacking Amorim... they have even discussed Klopp!

MANCHESTER UNITED bosses are split over who to appoint as the club's next manager – and when to do it.

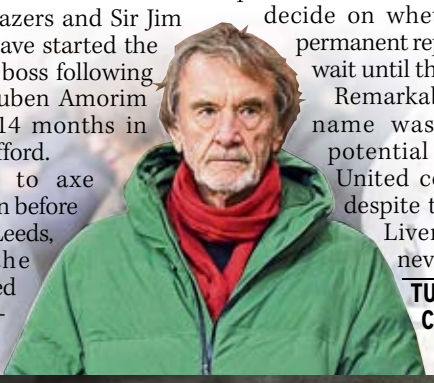
BY **JEREMY CROSS**

Owners the Glazers and Sir Jim Ratcliffe (right) have started the search for a new boss following the sacking of Ruben Amorim yesterday after 14 months in charge at Old Trafford.

The decision to axe Amorim was taken before Sunday's draw at Leeds, after which the Portuguese opened fire on his employers in an explosive press conference. But despite taking the decision to show Amorim the door, the powers that be at Old Trafford cannot decide on whether to appoint a permanent replacement now – or wait until the summer instead.

Remarkably, Jurgen Klopp's name was discussed as a potential candidate in the United corridors of power, despite the fact the former Liverpool boss would never consider moving

TURN TO PAGE 59, COL 2



ON THE WAY OUT Ruben Amorim leaves his home in Cheshire after his 14-month reign at United was brought to an end

HAMMERS BOSS ON DEFENSIVE

NUNO BACKTRACKS OVER 'EFFORT' CLAIM: PAGE 53

LIAM CAN FIND CURE FOR BLUES

ROONEY BACKS HIS FORMER No.2 ROSENIOR: PAGE 54

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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all of the digits from one to nine. **Solutions tomorrow**

EASY

	4	8			2	6		7
9			5			4	1	
	6		8			2		
8				2		3	4	
		4	6		9			5
	7	5		3		1		
		1			4		7	
7	8	3		5	1			4
		6	3				2	

MEDIUM

6					9			1
	5			2			3	
		3			5	7		
7		2	1		6			5
	9				4		2	
	1		3		2	4		9
2		5	7			8		
				5				
1		4	9			2		7

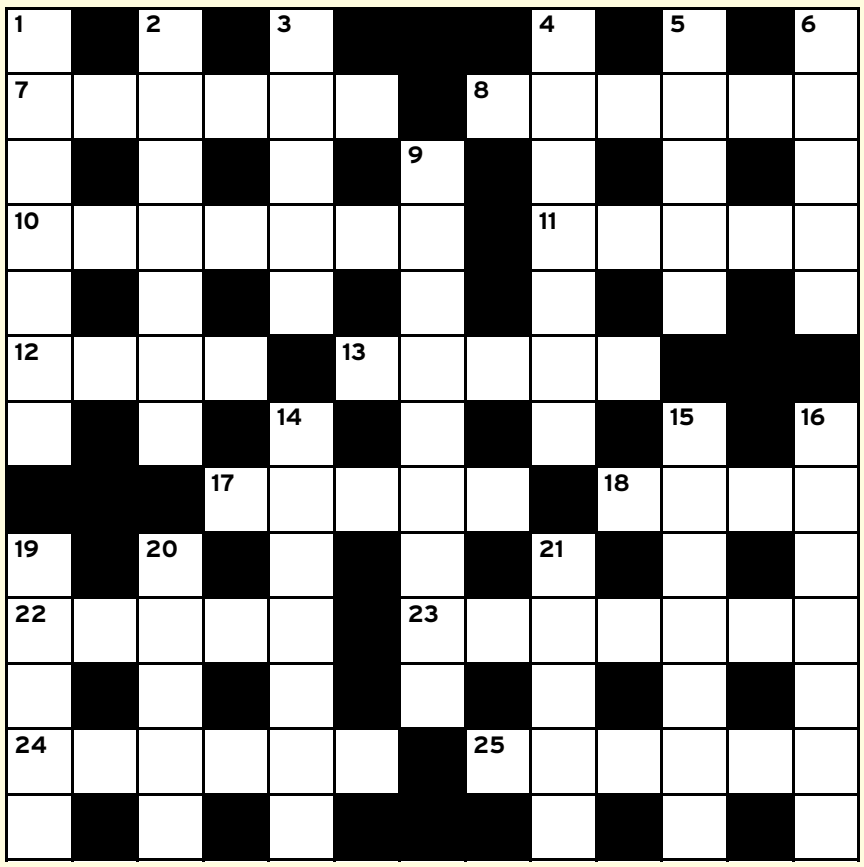
DIFFICULT

3		6		2		4		7
		2				6		
	9						1	
4			1		6			2
		8				7		
6			7		8			9
	5						2	
		4				9		
2		7		9		5		4

Extra clues: **0901 322 5609**
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Today's solution: **0907 181 2573**
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS
7 Make (6)
8 Interfere (6)
10 Offender (7)
11 Charge (5)
12 Chief (4)
13 Vacant (5)
17 Raise (5)
18 Front (4)
22 Bring about (5)
23 Petty (7)
24 Help (6)
25 Keep (6)

DOWN
1 Decisive (7)
2 Impose (7)
3 Jocund (5)
4 Notwithstanding (7)
5 Let in (5)
6 Flat (5)
9 Incite (9)
14 Cost (7)
15 Funny (7)
16 Emotion (7)
19 Fragment (5)
20 Swear (5)
21 Mature (5)

Solution tomorrow

Stuck on the puzzle? Call **0905 789 4188** to hear individual clues or the full solution

Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Service provider Spoke Ltd - **Helpline 0333 202 3390*

CROSS DOUBT

Target times: Average: **16 mins** Good: **12 mins** Excellent: **8 mins**

Stuck? Call for a clue
0901 322 5601
Halve your Target Time!

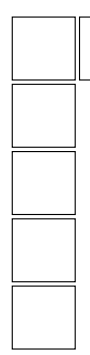
Today's solution
0901 322 5607
Both today's words in a moment!

**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

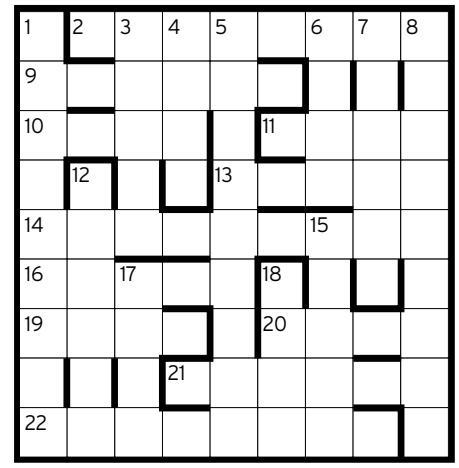
Can you make two common five-letter words from the nine letters given, using each letter only once? You can – but only if one letter features in both words in the squares on the right. There's at least one way to do it, and you have to have the right letter at the crossover – but which one is it?

See if you can find the answer within our target time. If you need help, ring our clue-line below to find out the crossover letter. Solution tomorrow

E E E H M N S T U



SMALL CROSSWORD



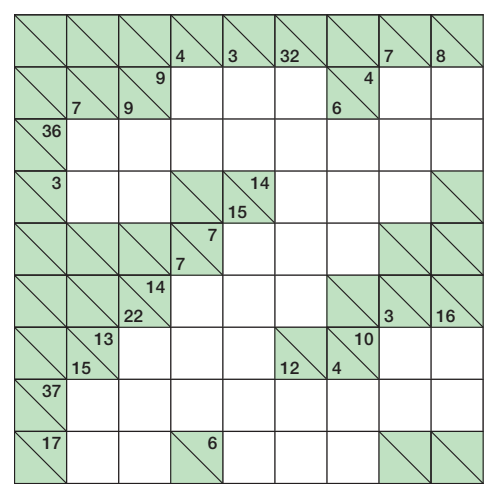
ACROSS
2 Words with the same meaning (8)
9 Alliances (6)
10 Prompts (4)
11 Singing voice (4)
13 Superior (5)
14 Often dour (anag.) (9)
16 Relish (3,2)
19 Public school (4)
20 _ Fitzgerald, singer (4)
21 Also (2,4)
22 Decompression sickness (3,5)

DOWN
1 Juicy (9)
3 Give in (5)
4 Facial feature (4)
5 Deliberately (2,7)
6 High-pitched bark (4)
7 Shooting star (6)
8 Deficit (9)
12 Grab (6)
15 Lubricated (5)
17 Prod (4)
18 Stitched (4)

Solution tomorrow

For today's solution call:
0907 181 2582
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

KAKURO



Fill each sequence of blank squares using the numbers 1-9. Each sequence – across and down – must total the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of each line. A number may be repeated in each line but NOT in a sequence.

Solution tomorrow

Puzzles

QUIZWORD

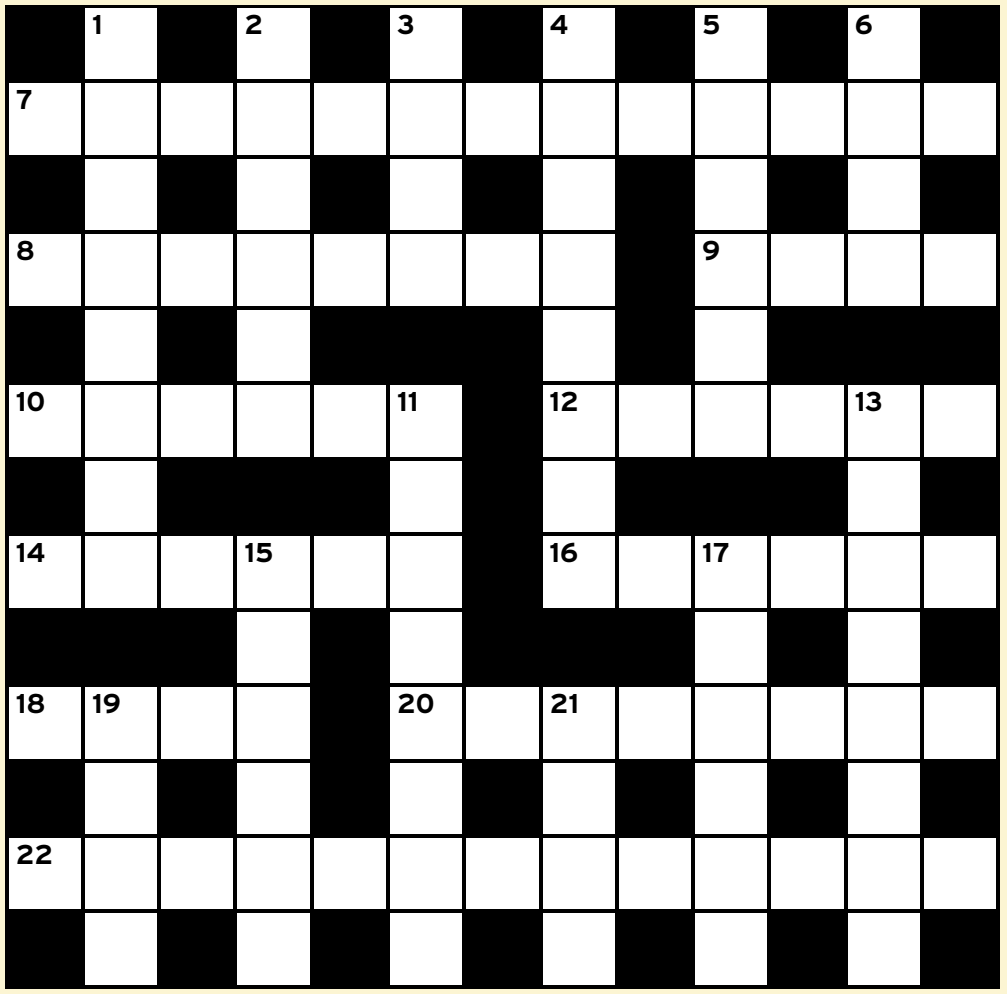
ACROSS

7 US actress who played the title role in the sitcom Rhoda (7,6)
8 & 12 Steven Spielberg film starring Tom Cruise as John Anderton (8,6)
9 Constable in the Shakespeare play Love's Labour's Lost (4)
10 & 20 George Bernard Shaw play whose central character is John Tanner (3,3,8)
12 See 8
14 Genre of music that originated in Jamaica in the 1960s (6)
16 Alcoholic drink made of beer and lemonade (6)
18 Burrowing bivalve mollusc such as the quahog (4)
20 See 10
22 Frederick Forsyth novel published in 1989 (3,10)

DOWN

1 One of a group of Japanese pilots in the Second World War who performed suicidal missions (8)
2 City in northern Italy that was under Austrian rule from 1797 to 1866 (6)
3 1943 novella by Colette (4)
4 James Gray film starring Mark Wahlberg and Joaquin Phoenix (3,5)
5 Billy, actor whose film roles include Oram in Alien: Covenant (6)
6 Any of several small, short-necked freshwater ducks often with brightly marked plumage (4)
11 Method of training a horse to perform manoeuvres in response to a rider's body signals (8)
13 'The --- ---', nickname of the aviator Manfred von Richthofen (3,5)
15 Andrés, 1972 French Open men's singles tennis champion (6)
17 --- IV, pope from 1154 to 1159 who was born Nicholas Breakspear (6)
19 Bert, actor whose film roles included Professor Spats in The Night They Raided Minsky's (4)
21 John Frederick, US artist whose works include the 1885 oil The Poor Man's Store (4)

Solution tomorrow



Stuck on the puzzle? Call
0905 789 4190
to hear individual clues or the full solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*
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Helpline 0333 202 3390

SAMURAI SUDOKU

In Samurai Sudoku, normal sudoku rules apply, but the 9x9 sudoku at the centre shares four of its 3x3 boxes with those of the outer sudokus.

Solution tomorrow

3	5				8							9		6				4	
			6			8	3	4						1			5	7	
4		7			9							3	8	9				6	
	9		1			2								3	4	2			
5	6			8								8					9		1
						1	4	6				6		2					
9		5		6					9	6						8		4		6
		8					6									1	6			
				5	1				5	1						5		2		3
						7		8				5		4						
									3		8									
						2		4				8		3						
1		2		4						2	7				9	7				
			5	2									5					9		
4		3		9						5	6					5		8		6
						4		8				5	8	6						
7		8						9								8			4	5
			9	3	8									4			5		8	
	3				4	6	1								1			4		7
	7	5			6							3	1	7			6			
	4				9		5								8				1	3

WORD BUILDER

Answer each clue so that every word contains the same letters as the previous word, plus or minus one.

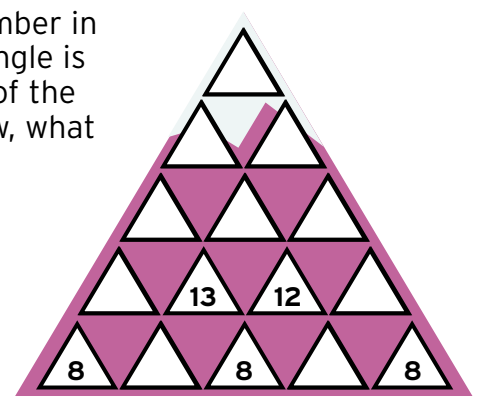
Solution tomorrow

1 □□□
2 □□□□
3 □□□□□
4 □□□□□□
5 □□□□□
6 □□□□
7 □□□

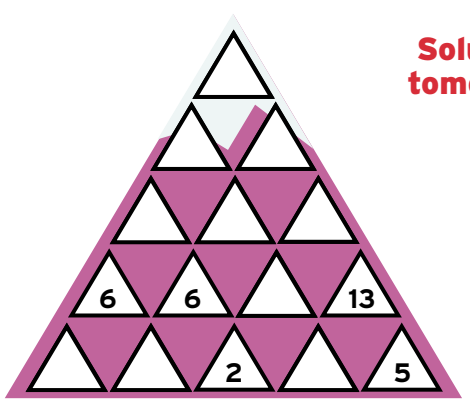
1 Limb
2 Toboggan
3 Swelling
4 Break into
5 Thin porridge
6 Trap
7 Regret

SUMMIT UP

If the number in each triangle is the sum of the two below, what is the top number?



Solution tomorrow



SMALL CROSSWORD

Across:
1 Excessive,
7 Straws,
9 Char,
10 Inner,
12 Pane,
13 Louisiana,
14 Agog,
16 Torso,
18 Tori,
19 Globes,
20 Satellite.

Down:
1 Escalate,
2 Crag,
3 Earwig,
4 Swiss roll,
5 Inn,
6 Vienna,
8 Treatise,
11 Bogota,
12 Pistol,
15 Gobi,
17 Rut.

ARROW-WORD

Arrow-words are like crosswords, but the clues are printed inside squares on the grid. Write your answers in the blank squares in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Solution tomorrow

WORDSEARCH

P	I	B	R	V	R	U	A	W	U	S	T	Y	C	O
E	K	V	X	E	J	X	V	X	H	L	Q	S	U	R
N	S	C	E	H	T	E	N	T	S	A	F	T	Y	F
I	E	G	O	D	J	U	T	U	N	F	Y	A	D	O
L	N	E	O	R	D	G	O	V	Y	V	V	R	Z	R
W	J	N	D	K	F	Y	I	S	E	L	E	T	B	D
O	B	R	N	L	D	L	S	S	H	Z	R	P	Q	N
B	Q	A	E	N	E	D	O	T	N	P	D	O	S	E
L	B	F	U	L	N	S	D	W	O	S	O	I	Z	S
U	W	L	S	W	R	R	H	R	R	N	G	N	H	S
A	D	H	D	E	A	E	T	I	R	F	E	T	M	S
H	F	D	I	Z	E	L	C	R	O	M	E	R	P	D
O	Z	S	I	T	A	B	N	S	E	N	T	U	B	A
A	O	L	N	N	B	L	T	E	R	F	R	S	S	X
N	U	C	D	M	E	Y	P	S	Y	N	N	V	H	Y

BRITISH & IRISH LIGHTHOUSES

Find all the terms listed below in the grid.

Solution tomorrow

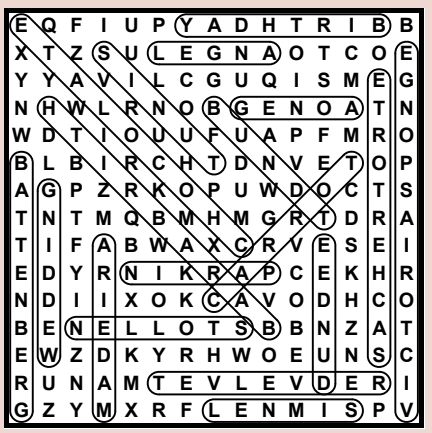
ANVIL ● CROMER ● EDDYSTONE ● FARNE FASTNET ● GODREVY ● HAULBOWLINE LIZARD ● LUNDY ● NAB ● NEEDLES ORFORDNESS ● PORTLAND ● SOUTER SPURN ● ST BEES ● START POINT WALNEY ● WHITBY ● WOLF ROCK

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Utter, **4** Profess, **8** Courage, **9** Erode, **10** Note, **11** Dishevel, **13** Boon, **14** Fund, **16** Reckless, **17** Pair, **20** Below, **21** Eyewash, **22** Excerpt, **23** Stern.
Down: 1 Unconquerable, **2** Trust, **3** Real, **4** Precis, **5** Overhaul, **6** Evolved, **7** Steal a march on, **12** Follower, **13** Bucolic, **15** Assent, **18** Abate, **19** Less.

WORDSEARCH



ARROW-WORD

	H		T		S		G		V		E			
R	A	C	H	E	L		I	T	A	L	Y			
	L		A		E	L	F		N		E			
S	O	O	T	H	E		T	R	I	E	S			
		I		A	P	T		O	S	L	O			
G	A	L	O	R	E		A	B	H	O	R			
	S		B	E	R	A	T	E		P	E	G		F
O	G	R	E	S		T	O	S	S	E	S		G	O	O
	O		D		H	E	N		A			P	A	R	R
N	O	V	I	C	E		E	N	R	O	L		M		D
	D	E	E		M	O	S	A	I	C		A	I	D	E
T	A	R	N	S		U		C		C	O	R	N	E	R
	S	A	T		S	T	A	R		U	N	I		A	
				U		R	E	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	
G	R	I	M						B	E	D			E	
	F		R	I	S	K	Y			I	R	E			
G	A	R	E	T	H		O	C	T	E	T				
	C		S	C	O	R	N			O	D	E			
T	E	E	T	H	E		E	R	R	O	R				

SUDOKU EASY

4	8	1	3	2	6	7	9	5
7	9	3	4	5	8	2	6	1
6	2	5	7	9	1	4	3	8
5	1	2	8	4	3	9	7	6
9	3	6	2	7	5	8	1	4
8	4	7	6	1	9	5	2	3
2	5	8	1	3	7	6	4	9
1	7	9	5	6	4	3	8	2
3	6	4	9	8	2	1	5	7

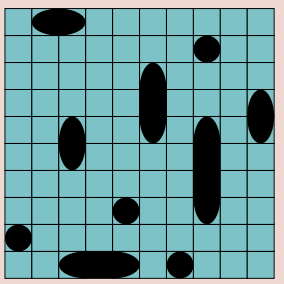
SUDOKU MEDIUM

5	2	1	8	9	4	7	6	3
4	8	6	3	2	7	1	5	9
9	7	3	1	5	6	8	4	2
7	5	4	9	3	2	6	1	8
1	9	8	7	6	5	2	3	4
6	3	2	4	1	8	9	7	5
2	1	7	5	8	3	4	9	6
8	4	5	6	7	9	3	2	1
3	6	9	2	4	1	5	8	7

SUDOKU DIFFICULT

6	5	8	3	2	4	9	7	1
7	3	2	6	1	9	8	4	5
4	9	1	7	5	8	2	3	6
1	4	6	9	3	7	5	8	2
8	7	3	2	6	5	1	9	4
5	2	9	4	8	1	7	6	3
3	6	7	1	9	2	4	5	8
9	1	5	8	4	3	6	2	7
2	8	4	5	7	6	3	1	9

BATTLESHIPS



KAKURO

		2	1		2	1		
		9	6	2	4	5	8	7
	1	7		1	3		2	1
	2	8	3		1	3		
			1	2		1	3	2
	9	8		1	2		9	1
	6	5	3	4	1	2	7	
			1	3		1	8	

WORD BUILDER

Add, Dead, Waded, Dawdle, Addle, Lead, Ale

TARGET

BEECHWOOD
BEECHWOOD, bode, booed, bowed, cede, chewed, code, cooed, cooeed, cowed, dhow, dweeb, echoed, heed, hewed, hoed, hood, oohed, owed, weed, wood, wooed

THE ALPHAPUZZLE

Across: Abhor, Jelly, Adjective, Face, Axle, Moped, Ego, Inn, Bomb, Kilt, Tea, Ape, Crazy, Exit, Slab, Champagne, Renew, Power.
Down: Rifle (clue), Trend, Acrobatic, Hide, Thin, Mimic, Rye, Mew, Cape, Damp, Jet, Amp, Daisy, Lava, Snow, Excitable, Queen, Elbow.

THE ALPHABEATER

Black squares: 5, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 23, 24, 27, 29, 30, 31, 35, 40.
Across: Quick, Thinking, Under, Views, Adjective, Dim, Ruck, Faze, Web, Ladybirds, Blaze, Aloft, Cynicism, Proxy. **Down:** Urn, Lays, Jerboa, Crepe, Leech, Phobia, Oddest, Knave, Idler, Endear, Gnaw, Fix.

CROSS DOUBT

Across: COMES
Down: GRIEF

Puzzles

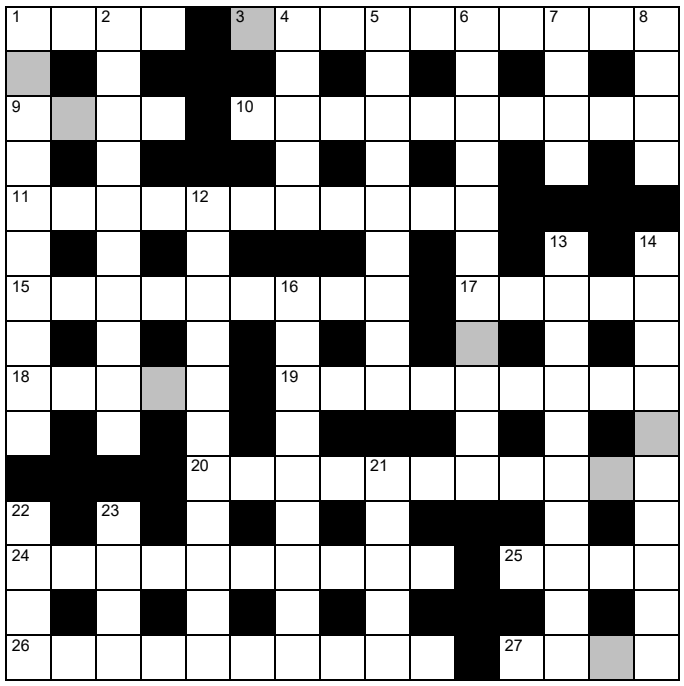
CRUSADER PRIZE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Fashion accessory is a hit (4)
3 Edward tolerates toys (5,5)
9 Stun reversed kernels (4)
10 'Fruit – A Virtue' composition is abstract (10)
11 Sweet Frenchman harms new permit (11)
15 Sent up aid – sister improved (9)
17 The first ceremony is hardly original (5)
18 Deficit not initially showing planet (5)
19 Now begrudge putting broken tap first (2,7)
20 No insights – a problem? Brilliant (11)
24 Peer wildly – it's a carrot (10)
25 Fish with a musical tail (4)
26 Break after a drink and a biscuit (10)
27 The advantage of a border (4)

DOWN

1 Group leader reportedly prohibited teacher (10)
2 Writing that bait includes wild attire (10)
4 I care about Heather (5)
5 Two swims in brief economic recovery (6,3)
6 Confirm, and carry, comedian joining head (4,7)
7 Like a family (4)
8 Most employees have to stop (4)
12 Unkind austere journalist has compassion (11)
13 Hearing spirited gangster is finding work (10)
14 Created gin cocktail to scale (10)
16 Fight act about American slave (9)
21 Many alarmed about antelope (5)
22 Youngster clambering around (4)
23 City of inclination? (4)



WIN £100 CASH

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN
Read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word.

TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight Saturday. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, January 6, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by January 7 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.
An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays.

● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight Saturday. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

LAST FRIDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Debilitate, 6 Spam, 10 Forager, 11 Normans, 12 Resetting, 13 Genoa, 14 Sheer, 15 Meter maid, 17 Matchless, 20 Aisle, 21 Lemon, 23 Rain cloud, 25 Nearing, 26 Plaudit, 27 Erse, 28 Adventurer. **DOWN:** 1 Defer, 2 Bird's nest, 3 Lighter-than-air, 4 Terbium, 5 Tonight, 7 Prawn, 8 Mishandle, 9 Gregorian chant, 14 Semblance, 16 Absconder, 18 Enraged, 19 Stipple, 22 Means, 24 Deter. **Prizeword:** Similar

TARGET

P	E	R
L	Y	A
N	U	D

● *The Target uses words in the main body of Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (1999 edition)*

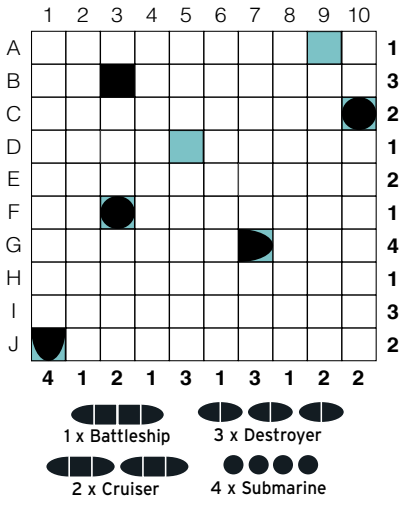
HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?
In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in S permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 29; **very good** 43; **excellent** 57 **(or more).** Solution tomorrow

Call **0907 181 2585**
for today's Target solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

BATTLESHIPS

FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.
Solution tomorrow



THE ALPHABEATER

TARGET TIME: 30 minutes

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? Each grid number represents a letter – or black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and black squares below the grid to start. The grid is 'rotationally symmetrical' – in other words, it looks the same if you turn the page upside down.
Solution tomorrow

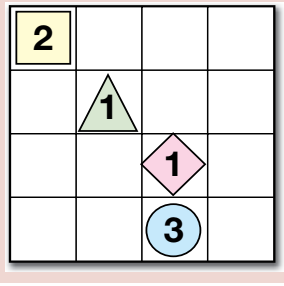
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2560
(Deduct three minutes for each extra clue letter heard)
Full solution
0907 181 2558
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

A	40	38	8	39	9	9	13	28	29	2	30	10	6
B & D	1	22	39	17	33	12	26	12	40	21	39	15	12
E	35	8	4	1	35	12	10	19	16	23	21	2	30
F	39	26	32	11	23	37	3	33	25	38	37	7	4
G	40	10	29	38	4	34	30	9	4	15	32	12	27
H I J K L	36	35	20	4	27	2	4	22	8	16	12	33	22
M	18	38	39	3	32	39	30	12	14	17	9	17	36
N O P	34	26	25	34	4	11	36	3	12	8	40	35	12
Q R	6	32	13	35	8	21	12	2	40	34	2	23	9
S T	32	11	9	17	31	34	10	35	7	10	24	11	19
U V	4	7	4	33	10	5	33	40	39	32	4	5	39
W	8	13	30	4	21	12	23	12	29	3	8	26	31
X Y Z	31	16	18	7	16	30	39	9	20	39	21	29	12

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 C	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37 K	38	39	40

● Alternatively, for six Extra Letter clues to your mobile, text **DXBEAT** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.

KEIJO



Place the tiles into the grid so that four different numbers and four different shapes appear in each row and column.
Solution tomorrow

THE ALPHAPUZZLE®

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number stands for a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. Solution tomorrow

DIFFICULTY: 7/10; **TARGET:** 22 mins; **CLUE:** Transaction town in Cheshire.

A	26	2	22	1	■	15	3	9	16	18	9	14	5
B	9	■	8	■	5	■	9	■	3	■	22	■	19
C	8	10	16	8	15	2	5	■	19	24	25	2	14
D & F	15	■	10	■	17	■	10	■	4	■	8	■	9
H	19	5	23	9	22	■	2	4	15	17	3	9	■
I	3	■	■	■	9	■	9	■	■	■	10	■	5
J	7	19	4	19	5	1	■	19	7	11	9	22	16
K & P	12	■	8	■	■	■	5	■	9	■	■	■	3
L	■	19	3	19	21	14	9	■	25	14	19	4	9
M	5	■	8	■	2	■	6	■	9	■	14	■	19
N	19	22	22	9	13	■	2	3	19	22	17	2	4
O	22	■	17	■	8	■	17	■	16	■	11	■	9
Q	7	8	10	2	4	9	22	16	■	20	9	19	3
R													
S													
T													
U													
V													
W													
X													
Y													
Z													

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 O	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 G	21	22	23	24	25	26	

EXTRA LETTER CLUES: 0907 181 2568*
Hear up to six Extra Letters, deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard.
FULL SOLUTION: **0907 181 2565***
ACROSS ONLY: **0907 181 2561*** / DOWN ONLY: **0907 181 2562***
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DXALPHA** *to* **64343.** *Texts cost £1 plus standard network rate.*

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THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

TODAY'S ANSWERS: BEGINNER = 27; INTERMEDIATE = 46; ADVANCED = 119.

PLAY MORE CROSSWORDS AND GAMES AT EXPRESS.CO.UK/PUZZLES

DAILY EXPRESS

Get your money growing in 2026

SPRING CLEAN YOUR FINANCES WITH OUR EXCLUSIVE DAILY EXPRESS EIGHT-PAGE PULLOUT

SPRING CLEAN YOUR FINANCES

12 WAYS TO

THE new year is the perfect opportunity to take stock of your finances – and the arrival of 2026 gives more reason than most. With a round of tax hikes and allowance cuts on the way, the year ahead will bring a new set of challenges.

As the cost-of-living crisis drags on into another year, being proactive now can help you manage your budget and make your money work harder this year and beyond. The following 12 top tips will help.

1 BUILD A RAINY DAY FUND:
A rainy day fund is the key to financial security – and 2026 is the year to either start one or strengthen what you have. "It starts with understanding what you can afford to save each month," explains Adam French, head of news at Moneyfactcompare.co.uk.

"Begin by tracking your income and essential expenses, then work out a realistic amount to set aside, whether that is 1% or 20% of your income, it all counts. Once you've settled on an amount, make it automatic by setting up a direct debit or standing order to transfer savings as soon as you get paid. This removes the temptation to skip a month." French adds: "Research easy access accounts or regular savers with high interest rates, and watch out for withdrawal limits or penalties. As it's your emergency fund, it should be easy to access."

2 PAY DOWN DEBT:
Debt becomes more expensive the longer it's left, so tackling it early in the year can help secure long-term savings. Jacqui Hamilton, consumer affairs expert at Experian, recommends what she calls the "avalanche method", which helps save money on interest and clears your balance faster. "Start by identifying which debts carry the highest interest rates. Focus on paying those off first while continuing to make at least the minimum payments on your other accounts. Once the highest-interest debt is cleared, move on to the next." Hamilton adds: "Reducing overall debt frees up your finances but also improves your credit score, making it easier to access better rates and products."

3 SET A SPENDING BUDGET:
With household costs still rising, a budget is essential. It helps you track your spending, understand where your money goes, and ensure you have enough to cover everyday expenses in addition to the small luxuries.

Alice Haine, personal finance analyst at Bestinvest by Evelyn Partners, says: "A budget is one of the most powerful ways to take control of your finances. Jot down how much money is coming in, then list your essential spending, such as bills. Then add in those 'like-to-have' expenditures, like holidays and new clothes… and don't forget savings and investments.

"Finally, subtract your total expenses from your net income, after tax, to see what's left." If you're overspending, Haine suggests cutting non-essentials first and, if needed, negotiating a better deal on core bills. "Automate big payments to leave your bank account at the start of every month. That way, you know exactly what's left for day-to-day spending." Haine adds: "Be mindful not to hold too many savings in a regular bank or building society account, or risk breaching your personal allowance. Tax-efficient savings are becoming more key."

4 VISIT PRICE COMPARISON SITES:
Map out your key household bills such as broadband, energy and insurance and use a comparison site to see if you can secure a cheaper deal. MoneySupermarket says that 10% of customers who switched energy providers via its platform made an average annual saving of £851. Broadband customers saved an average of £171 a year.

5 CANCEL UNUSED SUBSCRIPTIONS:
Thousands of Britons are still losing money to "invisible spending" on forgotten subscriptions. HSBC's research found people could save an average of £34 a month, which works out as £408 a year, simply by cancelling services.

Streaming platforms, music services and delivery memberships like Amazon Prime are the most commonly axed.

Too many people keep unused subscriptions out of habit, "just in case" or through fear of missing out. Review your direct debits and remove any that you no longer need or aren't using.

6 CLAIM MARRIAGE ALLOWANCE:
With tax thresholds frozen and more households being dragged into higher bands, claiming every relief you're entitled to is essential.

Rachael Griffin, tax and financial planning expert at Quilter, says couples should check eligibility for the marriage allowance. "Frozen tax thresholds mean the state pension will again exceed the personal allowance next year, bringing many more pensioners into income tax.

"The marriage allowance remains a simple way for couples to save. It's one of the few remaining opportunities to cut the tax bill without complicated planning."

It lets the taxpayer transfer £1,260 of their personal allowance to your spouse or civil partner. This can reduce tax by up to £252 per tax year. To benefit as a couple, the lower earner must normally have an annual income below the Personal Allowance of £12,570. The higher earner must pay income tax at the basic rate, which usually means their income would fall between £12,571 and £50,270. You can backdate your claim by up to four years if eligible, which could result in a rebate of just over £1,000 if the full amount is claimable.

Setting up a regular direct debit or standing order can help grow your rainy day fund by saving every month

BEAT THE BILLS

'As the cost-of-living crisis drags on into another year, being proactive can help you manage your budget'

With financial pressures unlikely to disappear in 2026, and the threat of inflation-busting bills, Consumer Editor KATIE ELLIOTT reveals some easy steps to help make your money work harder... so you don't have to

7 CLAIM STATE BENEFITS: **More than £24billion in government benefits is estimated to go unclaimed in 2025/26. It's up to you to apply for help. Use Turn2Us's Benefits Calculator and Grants Search tools to find the support you're entitled to.**

For hard-up households, Pension Credit can provide a vital boost to weekly income. It also unlocks additional support, such as free NHS prescriptions, dental treatments, and help with heating costs through schemes like the Warm Home Discount and Cold Weather Payment.

If you have care needs due to a physical or mental health condition, look into Attendance Allowance. This benefit isn't means-tested, so your income and savings won't affect eligibility, and it can be worth up to £5,300 a year at its highest rate.

8 TRACE LOST PENSIONS: Billions of pounds worth of pension pots are currently sitting idle and forgotten about in the UK. The average missing pot is worth around £9,470, rising to £13,620 for those aged 55–75, according to the Pensions Policy Institute. Frequent job changes mean many people leave multiple small workplace pensions behind, making them easy to lose track of. The good news is that reclaiming them is free. Start with the government's Pension Tracing Service, or use tools like online services like Pension Attention or Gretel to reconnect with missing pots.

9 WRITE OR UPDATE YOUR WILL: **More than half of UK adults still don't have a will, according to the Money and Pensions Service. That's a startling statistic, considering the financial and emotional headaches that can follow an intestate death – from delays and legal wrangling to unexpected tax bills. Dying 'intestate' means your estate will be divided according to intestacy laws, which may not align with your wishes.**

Keep an updated list of your assets and write or update your will, especially if you have experienced a major life change, such as marriage, divorce, or remarriage, as these can render previous wills void.

10 PROTECT YOUR MONEY FROM SCAMS: Fraudsters are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and scam losses continue to rise. Richard Daniels, director of fraud at TSB, warns: "Almost £1.5million is lost by households to bank transfer fraud in the UK every day, with over £2,000 lost per case."

He says staying sceptical is the strongest line of defence, adding: "Social media platforms are rife with scam content – from romance fraud, to purchase scams and bogus investment 'opportunities', so tread very carefully.

"While fraud attacks are increasingly complex, with pushy and persuasive scammers, you can beat them with a simple trick: Pause and ask yourself, 'Could this be fraud?'"

That pause, he says, can help you "break the spell," hang up, delete or verify before acting.

11 START INVESTING NOW: **With savings interest rates easing and inflation still on the rise, investing remains a key way to grow wealth over the long term – if you can tolerate some risk. Bestinvest's Alice Haine says: "Investing in the stock market may not be suitable for everyone, but equities have historically delivered higher real returns that beat inflation than cash over the long term. Although a time horizon of at least five years is recommended to ride out any short-term volatility."**

She warns that trying to time the market can backfire, adding: "A better approach can be to invest on a regular basis, such as monthly, rather than trying to time a lump sum investment.

"This takes advantage of pound-cost averaging, where you buy smaller amounts at regular intervals regardless of market conditions. This helps to cushion the effects of volatility."

A diversified portfolio is essential, and for hands-off investors, managed or "ready-made" portfolios can be a smart way to access expert asset allocation without having to do the work yourself.

12 USE YOUR CASH ISA ALLOWANCE: Cash ISA rules are set to change, with a new £12,000 annual allowance cap for under-65s set to come into force from 2027. From that point, those wanting to use their full £20,000 ISA allowance must direct the remaining £8,000 into investments. Alice Haine says: "Utilise your Cash ISA while you can – if you are under 65. Those that want to take advantage of their existing Cash ISA allowance could funnel £40,000 into their account before it happens – that's £20,000 this tax year and £20,000 next." With tax thresholds frozen and more savers being pulled into taxable territory, breaching the Personal Savings Allowance (the amount of interest you earn before paying tax) is becoming easier, particularly for higher-rate taxpayers.

Haine adds: "Bottom line: taking advantage of your Cash ISA allowance for cash savings is a no-brainer."

SPRING CLEAN YOUR FINANCES

Don't be shy and retiring when it comes to your state pension

Personal Finance Editor Harvey Jones reveals how to make the most of your benefits as you approach the end of your working life...

GET THE MOST OUT OF THE STATE PENSION:

First, the good news. The state pension will increase by 4.8% from April next year, thanks to the triple lock. That will lift the maximum new state pension to around £12,548 a year, while the basic state pension will climb to just under £9,616.

Many claimants will also receive additional state pension through the state earnings-related pension scheme (SERPs) or state second pension (S2P). Pensioners whose total income falls below these levels can claim pension credit, which lifts a single person's income to £12,376, or £18,889 for couples. The triple lock, which the Daily Express has successfully campaigned to continue, increases the pension annually with inflation, earnings, or 2.5%, whichever is highest. Its future is constantly questioned, but the government has confirmed it will continue for the life of this Parliament at least. One thing is changing in 2026. The state pension age will rise from 66 to 67, phased according to birth date, completing by 2028. That means people born between April 1960 and March 1961 will reach the new state pension age several months after turning 66, while those born between April 1961 and April 1977 will reach it on their 67th birthday. It will later rise to 68.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will send letters confirming individual retirement ages. The increase reflects our longer life expectancy, and aims to ensure people spend a similar proportion of adult life drawing a pension. The state pension is incredibly complicated, but it pays to understand how it works to avoid a shortfall.

HOW TO QUALIFY:

The state pension is the bedrock of retirement income, even if it isn't generous. But you don't automatically get the full amount. You build entitlement through qualifying national insurance contributions. Stephen Lowe, pensions specialist at Just Group, says: "If you check where you stand early enough, you can fix problems. Leave it too late, you may have little or no time to put things right."

GET A FORECAST:

If you haven't retired, consider finding out what you're on track to receive. Use Gov.uk/check-state-pension and sign in via Government Gateway.

Your forecast shows how much you're likely to get, when you can claim, and whether you can boost it. You can also apply by post using form BR19 or call the Future Pension Centre on 0800 731 0175. Lowe said getting a forecast makes planning your retirement easier. "Once you have it, you can judge how much extra income you'll need from workplace pensions, personal pensions, ISAs, savings and any other assets such as property," says Lowe.

PLUG STATE PENSION GAPS:

To get the full new state pension, you normally need 35 qualifying years of NI. Fewer than 10 years gives you nothing. Many end up with gaps after time-out raising children or caring for relatives, illness, periods of unemployment, low earnings, or self-employment.

Some may get NI credits automatically, but don't assume this will happen. Always check.

You could qualify if you claimed child benefit for a child under 12, were on maternity leave, ill or disabled, cared for someone 20 or more hours a week, or claimed Jobseeker's Allowance. Check your NI record at Gov.uk/check-national-insurance-record or call 0300 200 3500.

CONSIDER VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS:

If you still face a shortfall, pay Class 3 voluntary NI contributions to buy extra qualifying years. This can help if you were unemployed but didn't claim benefits, self-employed with low profits, or working overseas. Typically, you can go back six tax years. This can offer good value, as you may recoup the cost within a few years of retirement.

But if you die before or soon after claiming, you may lose out, so those with health issues should think carefully. It suits those in good health. Check costs and eligibility at Gov.uk or call the Future Pension Centre on 0800 731 0175. Assemble details such as your NI number before calling.

STATE PENSION DEFERRAL:

Most people claim their state pension as soon as they can, but deferring can increase the amount you get when you do finally draw it. Every nine weeks deferred raises it by 1%, a full year adds roughly 5.8%. The minimum deferral period is five weeks.

This mainly suits people in good health who are still working, as it can reduce tax bills while they have income from a job.

The downside is you need to live 15 or more years to catch up on the pension you forgo at first. For most, claiming as soon as possible still makes sense. Unfortunately, you can't

Taking sensible steps now could help give you a happy retirement, main, rather than leaving the pot empty, right

take the state pension early.

CLAIM BENEFITS:

If you've already retired, it's too late to boost your NI record, but you can still improve income by claiming every entitlement.

Billions in benefits go unclaimed each year, often by people who don't understand the complex system.

Lowe says: "Many people don't realise what benefits they can claim or assume they won't qualify, including many who own their home. Others may get less because they haven't built up enough qualifying years of NI or missed extra entitlements." DWP data shows up to £2.5billion of Pension Credit goes unclaimed annually, with almost a million pensioner households missing out on £2,600 a year on average. That's despite a recent campaign to boost take up.

Savings and small private pensions don't necessarily rule you out. You may get extra if you have caring responsibilities, a severe disability, receive other benefits like Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Housing Benefit, Council Tax reduction, free TV licence if over 75, help with NHS costs, or Winter Fuel Payment. Claims can usually be backdated by up to three months. Apply online at Gov.uk or call 0800 99 1234.

RETIRING ABROAD:

You can claim the state pension overseas, but in some countries it is frozen.

You do get uprating in the EU, EEA, Gibraltar, Switzerland, and countries with UK social security agreements such as the US and Israel.

However, pensions are frozen in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, which means its value will steadily decline in real terms over the years due to inflation.

TEN KEY STEPS TO GET 'PENSION READY'

BY **ANDREW TULLEY**
Technical director at advisory group Nuclues Financial

1 Invest in a pension and maximise tax relief: Contributing to a personal or workplace pension still brings generous tax relief. Basic-rate taxpayers get 20% back automatically, higher-rate taxpayers can reclaim more via their tax return. The benefit is clear, but contributions tie up your money until retirement.

2 Trace lost personal and company pensions: Many people forget old pensions from previous jobs. Use the Pension Tracing Service to find them.

3 Consider consolidating pensions: Bringing multiple pots together can simplify management and reduce fees. Be wary of losing guaranteed benefits or exit bonuses when moving older schemes though.

4 Use tax-efficient ISAs: ISAs complement pensions by letting your savings grow tax-free. They offer greater flexibility since you can withdraw money whenever you like. Returns on cash ISAs may struggle to beat inflation, so consider Stocks and Shares ISAs for growth, at least while younger.

5 Plan 25% tax-free cash: You can usually take up to 25% of your pension pot tax-free from age 55 (rising to 57 from 2028). This can be useful to pay down debt but don't treat it as a windfall, make sure your pension can last the course.

6 Plan withdrawals to minimise tax: Pension withdrawals are added to your total earnings for that year and may be subject to income tax. Drawing too much at once could push you into a higher tax bracket. Spreading withdrawals over several years can reduce the bill.

7 Consider the pros and cons of drawdown: Flexi-access drawdown offers control and growth potential, but investments carry risk and you could run out of money.

8 Consider an annuity for a steady income: Annuities provide guaranteed income for life. Shop around for the best rate. Consider blending with drawdown. Annuities offer certainty, drawdown the prospect of growth.

9 Inheritance planning to limit bills: Unused direct contribution pensions will be subject to inheritance tax from April 2027, but careful gifting or even spending the money can protect it from HMRC. This is complex, so consider tax advice.

10 Seek advice: Contact Pension Wise for free, impartial guidance to understand your options and avoid mistakes. For those with bigger pensions, independent financial advice could more than pay for itself.

Andrew Tulley

SOURCES OF HELP

- Gov.uk/state-pension
- MoneyHelper.org.uk
- Turn2Us.org.uk benefits calculator
- Pension Wise – free face-to-face guidance for over 50s, MoneyHelper or 0800 138 3944
- Citizens Advice
- Age UK
- Unbiased.co.uk for regulated advisers

SPRING CLEAN YOUR FINANCES

The tax burden is set to increase this year, so it pays to pull out the stops to limit your exposure, writes Personal Finance Editor HARVEY JONES. Here are some easy steps you can take to protect more of your hard-earned money from the taxman

HANDS OFF OUR CASH!

PENSIONS

THE state pension is the bedrock of most people's retirement income, and the good news is that it will rise in line with the triple lock next April at 4.8%. That will lift the full new state pension to almost £12,548, which is only £42 below the frozen £12,570 personal allowance.

Any retiree with even the tiniest sliver of extra income will start paying tax on it.

From April 2027, everyone receiving the full new state pension will exceed the personal allowance entirely.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves has suggested pensioners won't have to pay income tax if they have no other sources of income, but the devil is in the detail and we don't know it yet. One thing is clear, though.

More than nine million pensioners already pay income tax in retirement, and that number is only heading higher. So minimise what you are charged wherever possible.

The 25% tax-free cash lump sum benefit survived the Budget, despite feverish speculation that it was doomed.

Any withdrawals above that count as income and may trigger an income tax bill, so you need to plan carefully.

Spreading them over several years rather than taking one huge lump sum can save serious money, especially if it prevents you tipping into a higher tax bracket.

Be cautious with tax-free cash, warns Rachel Vahey

Think twice before raiding your pot too soon. You can start withdrawals from age 55, rising to 57 from 2028, but drawing a pension while still working can result in a painful tax hit.

Draining too much too early also risks leaving yourself short later in life.

Rachel Vahey, head of public policy at AJ Bell, warns savers to be cautious with their tax-free cash. "You will be removing it from an environment where it can grow tax free, so think long and hard about what you want to do with the money."

She adds: "If it languishes in a bank account, it could be losing out on valuable tax-free growth at the very time you need it most."

Another hazard is the little-known money purchase annual allowance (MPAA). Once you take taxable income from your pot, you can only contribute £10,000 a year back into a pension, including a workplace scheme.

Andrew Tricker, director at Lubbock Fine Wealth Management, says too many of us stumble into it unawares. "Triggering the MPAA can drastically reduce what you can contribute to a pension moving forward, catching many out," he says.

A brand new threat lands in April 2027, when Chancellor Rachel Reeves imposes inheritance tax on unused defined contribution pensions for the first time.

These pots were previously IHT-free, making them a popular way of passing wealth to loved ones while spending down other assets such as ISAs. That advantage will soon evaporate.

Families may need to rethink their plans. That could include gifting money earlier in life, though that brings its own risks if you later have unexpected spending needs or social care.

Gary Smith, financial planning expert at Evelyn Partners, says the patchwork of IHT gifting rules can be tricky to navigate so consider advice. "The annual small gifts allowances won't make much of a dent, so consider making larger gifts under the seven-year rule, known as 'potentially exempt transfers'," he adds.

For others, reviewing whether to stay in drawdown or shift into an annuity could help manage IHT exposure.

Some may even consider whole-of-life insurance to cover a future IHT bill, though premiums must be maintained for life.

Planning ahead is essential. With frozen thresholds, rising pension incomes and changing rules, the price of getting it wrong is climbing fast.

HOW TO MINIMISE TAX ON YOUR SAVINGS:

PENSIONERS got some rare good news in the recent Budget, as they can still shelter £20,000 a year in a Cash ISA, while the under-65s will be restricted to £12,000 from April 6, 2027. Older savers typically prefer the comfort of guaranteed, tax-free interest rather than risking their capital in the stock market, even if shares can produce a superior long-term return.

Most also benefit from the personal savings allowance (PSA), which lets basic-rate 20% taxpayers earn £1,000 of interest a year tax-free. That falls to £500 for higher-rate 40% taxpayers and nothing at all for 45% additional-rate payers.

Those rates have been frozen since the PSA was launched in 2016, while interest rates have risen strongly, and today more than a million pensioners pay income tax on their savings interest.

Jeremy Cox, head of strategy at Coventry Building Society, highlighted some less good news in the Budget, as Reeves introduced a new tax surcharge on savings interest, which will increase the tax bill for anyone exceeding their PSA.

"From April 2027, basic-rate taxpayers will pay 22% on interest over £1,000, while higher-rate taxpayers face a steep 42% on interest above £500," he says. "Additional-rate payers face a 47% charge."

Jeremy Cox says your ISA is crucial

Cox highlights another threat. "As income tax thresholds remain frozen, more savers risk entering higher tax bands where their PSA will be cut, exposing them to that 2% surcharge."

All of which makes using your ISA allowance crucial if you can afford it. The £20,000 annual limit gives all savers a chance to lock in tax-free interest for life.

For those with larger pots, Premium Bonds offer another tax-free option, allowing up to £50,000 per person. Winnings are entirely tax-free but unreliable, so anyone who needs predictable income should steer clear. More sophisticated savers might consider other tax-efficient routes, such as investing in gilts, but these can be complex and usually require advice.

Whatever you do, never settle

Chancellor Rachel Reeves wants more of your money

YOUR END-OF-YEAR TAX PLAN IS ESSENTIAL

THE end of the tax year on April 6 is looming, and it pays to start planning now so you're ready for it. Kwasi Yeboah, chartered financial planner at advisory group Saltus, has produced the following checklist.

"Early planning maximises tax efficiency and protects your savings," he says.

Use your ISA allowance: Put in the full £20,000 if you can. Choose the type that suits your goal – Cash ISA for low-risk saving, Stocks and Shares ISA for longer-term growth, Lifetime ISA for first-home or retirement, and Junior ISA for children. Couples should each use their allowance to protect £40,000 from tax.

Make the most of capital gains tax allowances: Review investments and assets. Sell holdings up to the £3,000 allowance to realise gains tax-free. Transfer assets to your spouse to double the allowance and, if possible, shift assets to the partner in the lower tax band to reduce CGT. Consider a "Bed & ISA" to move investments into tax-free ISAs.

Boost your pension contributions: Maximise your contributions to benefit from tax relief at your marginal rate. Carry forward unused allowances from the previous three years if possible. If employed, ask about increasing workplace contributions – especially if your employer matches them. Self-employed? Make contributions through your company to reduce corporation tax. Avoid the 60% tax trap: If earning between £100,000 to £125,140, make additional pension contributions or Gift Aid donations to restore your personal allowance and cut your tax bill.

Plan for inheritance tax: Use your £3,000 annual exemption and £250 small gifts. Gifts out of surplus income can reduce your future IHT liability. Consider IHT implications for pensions from April 2027. Check dividends and savings: Shift shares into an ISA to shelter dividends from tax.

Use your Personal Savings Allowance for interest, and review high-risk tax-efficient schemes like EIS, SEIS, or VCTs if you've maximised other allowances. Get advice first.

Kwasi Yeboah, right, says careful tax planning is a must

for a dud rate, says Anna Bowes, personal finance expert at The Private Office. "As ever, shop around for the best rate and remember you can transfer older Cash ISAs across to a new account, if the interest rate dwindles."

CAPITAL GAINS TAX:

CAPITAL gains tax (CGT) used to be called the forgotten tax, but investors who get caught out will have good reason to remember it. CGT is charged on profits made when selling assets such as antiques, jewellery, cryptocurrency, stocks and shares held outside the tax-free ISA wrapper. It also applies when selling a business.

You don't pay CGT on the full sale price, only on the increase in value since you acquired the asset. While your main home is exempt under private residence relief, CGT is charged on sales of second homes and investment properties. In her maiden Budget in October 2024, Reeves hiked CGT to a flat 18% for basic-rate taxpayers and 24% for higher-rate taxpayers.

Former Conservative Chancellor Jeremy Hunt previously slashed the annual exempt amount from £12,300 to just £3,000, making CGT a bigger threat than ever.

Rachael Griffin, tax and financial planning expert at Quilter, says landlords can reduce their bill by using the annual exempt amount and offsetting initial purchase costs.

Estate agent and solicitor fees, stamp duty paid on purchase, and surveying or valuation costs can all be deducted.

They can also claim for improvement works such as a garage, conservatory or extension, or upgrading kitchens and bathrooms. In every case, receipts must be kept.

Jason Hollands, managing director at Bestinvest, says married couples and civil partners can reduce their exposure by transferring assets between themselves free of CGT, doubling their £3,000 exemptions.

They can further cut CGT by putting assets into the name of the partner in the lower tax band. Otherwise, invest inside your £20,000 tax-free ISA allowance, where all returns are free of income tax and CGT.

Those who hold shares outside an ISA can sell them and buy them back within the tax-free wrapper, a process known as Bed & ISA.

"Just remember you may face a tax liability on the sale, but you could reduce this by spreading the initial sales over several tax years," Hollands adds.

DIVIDEND TAX:

RACHEL Reeves also hiked dividend tax bands by 2% in the Budget, in a move that will hit investors with shares held outside of an ISA, and limited company directors who take income as dividends. Around 3.6 million people already pay dividend tax, and more will be dragged in as allowances shrink and rates rise.

The basic rate will jump from 8.75% to 10.75% in April, while the higher rate will climb from 33.75% to 35.75%. The additional rate stays at 39.35%.

Jeremy Hunt had previously slashed the tax-free dividend allowance from £2,000 to just £500 today. Anyone earning more than that may owe dividend tax, unless their total income is below the £12,570 personal allowance. Older savers who rely on dividends from shares held outside tax shelters are among those most exposed.

Small company directors and freelancers who take part of their income as dividends will also feel the impact.

One defence is to shift shares into an ISA, where dividends are completely tax-free and need not be declared. Be aware that selling shares first may trigger capital gains tax, especially with the annual CGT allowance cut to £3,000.

SPRING CLEAN YOUR FINANCES

Planning for your later life

By **Harvey Jones**
Personal Finance Editor

WHEN it comes to our personal finances, the final years are just as complex as everything that came before, if not more so. We need to plan how to make pension pots last, think about how we can raise money once we're no longer working, prepare for the possibility of long-term care, and work out how to pass wealth cleanly and efficiently to the people we love.

It is a big list, and a lot can go wrong if we want to avoid leaving a stressful mess behind us. One major issue is that we're all living far longer than previous generations.

Eamonn Prendergast, chartered financial adviser at Palantir Financial Planning, says: "Living longer is a gift, but it brings real financial and lifestyle challenges."

Retirement often lasts 30 years or more. "People frequently underestimate how long they might live, how their spending will evolve, and how much care or support they'll need."

It also means children and grandchildren may receive inheritances later in life, in some cases delaying when they can buy homes. Alexandra Milton, partner at law firm Knights, says the earlier you start planning, the better. "Otherwise you risk making important decisions in distress, or even worse, leaving your loved ones to work things out once you are gone."

Many are intimidated and don't know where to start.

"If I were to advise you to consider any two documents, it would be your will and a key document called a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)," continues Milton.

A will does far more than say who gets what. "A well-written will is the foundation, setting out who should manage your estate and what should happen to your assets, from guardianship of children to funeral wishes and personal legacies," she says.

'Start early to avoid making those important decisions in distress, or leaving loved ones in the dark'

Too many people don't write a will, or fail to update an old one. Without one, assets may be redirected by intestacy rules, lost during divorce, or put at risk if beneficiaries are vulnerable.

"This is a vital tool for inheritance tax planning, helping you maximise what goes to your loved ones and minimise what's lost to tax," adds Milton.

It doesn't matter how old you are, start thinking NOW about your future wishes

AN LPA protects your finances if you become mentally incapacitated and aren't able to make informed decisions about your estate. Without one, a stroke, accident, or dementia could leave your family powerless.

If there is no LPA, someone wishing to act on your behalf may need to apply to the Court of Protection to be appointed as a deputy, Milton warns. "This is an expensive, time-consuming, and generally stressful process that would be much better avoided."

Esther Trevelyan, head of private clients at HCB Widdows Mason, says too many of us fail to act in time.

"A serious accident, sudden illness or dementia can happen to anyone," she explains. "We've seen countless distressed families discover they have no authority to make important decisions on behalf of those they love at such a crucial time."

Without an LPA, even a spouse cannot automatically access money in sole-name accounts or make decisions about care.

Long-term care is another concern. Private residential home fees average £66,456 a year, rising if nursing care is required, swallowing inheritances.

Planning for it is tricky. Older people must think carefully before giving away too much wealth to younger family members, in case they need it to cover care costs.

Those tempted to give wealth away to beat the social care means test may find it backfires, as local authorities may treat this as deliberate deprivation of assets, and charge anyway. While more of us will work into later life, there comes a point when we really have to stop.

Homeowners can raise money through equity release, borrowing against the value of their home without selling or repaying capital and interest during their lifetime.

Instead, the bill is settled when they die, or go into care, with the remainder falling back into the estate. Equity release customers are free to spend their money as they wish, for daily expenses, home renovations, gifts, or holidays.

Sadna Zaman, home finance manager at Canada Life, explains: "We anticipate that even more individuals will turn to equity release as a way to support family members through gifting, while also potentially reducing their future inheritance tax liabilities."

Planning for the final stage of life is never pleasant, but doing nothing is the riskiest approach.

The earlier people put the right structures in place, the more control, clarity and peace of mind they and their families will have when it matters most.

And that's a win for everyone.

EASE BURDEN ON LOVED ONES BY ACTING NOW

Sarah Coles of Hargreaves Lansdowne

PLANNING ahead isn't just about protecting your own finances – it's about sparing family and friends extra stress when you're no longer around, according to Sarah Coles, head of personal finance at Hargreaves Lansdown.

"Dealing with grief is hard enough but an incredibly difficult time is often made even harder by the frustration and confusion that can be caused to the people left behind," she says.

A clear register of assets can make a huge difference. Listing accounts, pensions, investments, and day-to-day arrangements like utility providers helps loved ones find what's there quickly, reducing the risk of overlooked money or unpaid bills.

Assemble details on digital accounts and passwords, otherwise money, savings and investments could go astray. Coles suggests keeping this up to date alongside a will or LPA.

Simplifying finances now also helps. Consolidating old savings accounts, ISAs, and investments cuts the number of providers your family has to contact, making the process smoother and less stressful. Letters of wishes are another useful tool. These allow you to record specific bequests, funeral preferences, or guidance on handling your estate, and work well alongside a formal will.

Pensions deserve special attention too. Expression of wish forms ensure that death benefits go to the intended recipients, particularly after personal circumstances change.

Finally, think about care costs.

Whether considering equity release, renting or selling property, or deferred payment agreements with local authorities, having a plan ensures your family can make practical choices quickly and confidently.

Coles adds: "Taking these steps now can make a huge difference for those handling your affairs after you've gone."